

# "Undercurrents:"
## Pushing Against Expectations

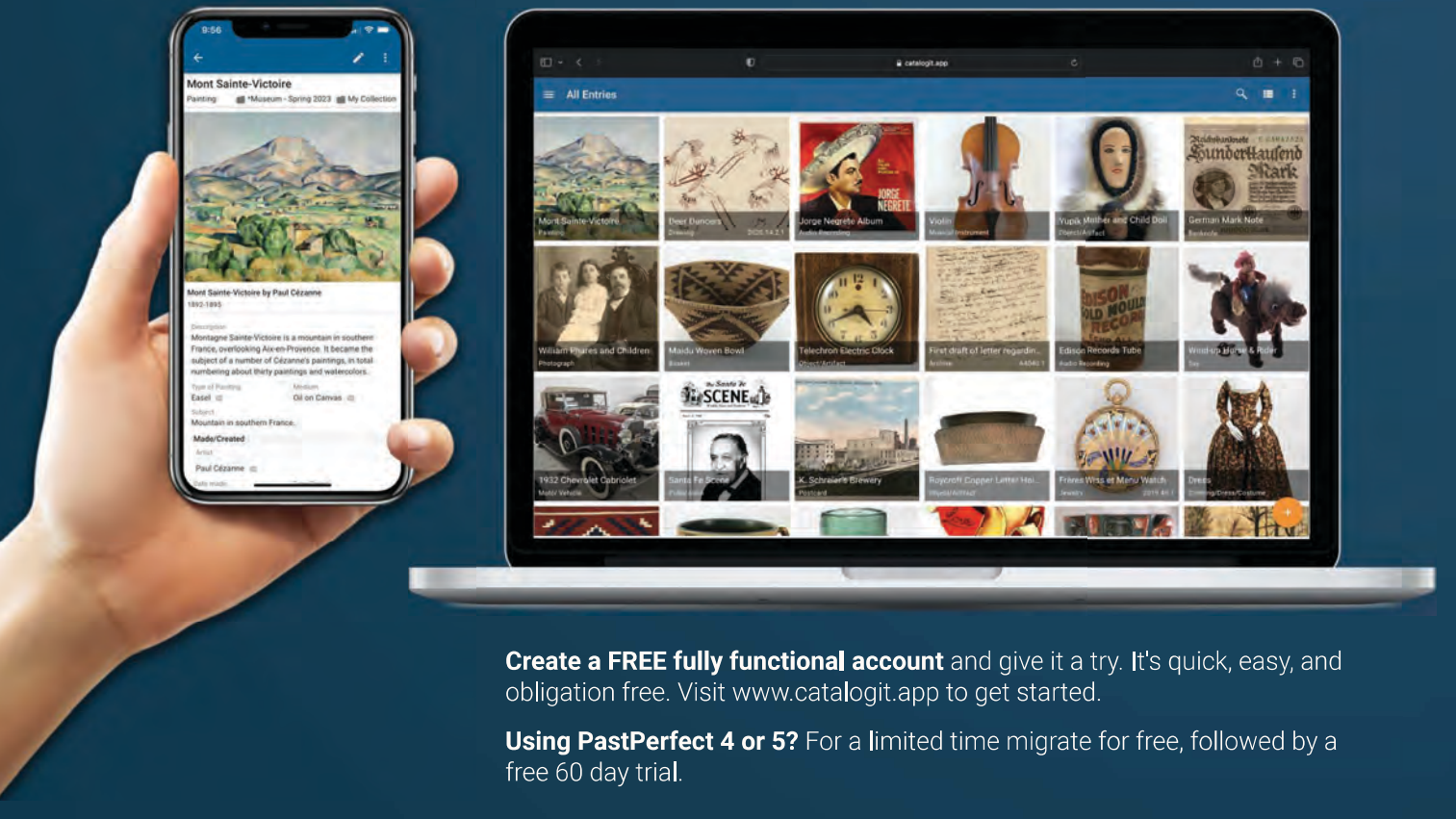
2026 NEMA Annual Conference
November 4-6, 2026
Mystic, Connecticut

nema

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# How to Make the Most of NEMA 2026!

### CONFERENCE APP
Unlock the potential of the 2026 NEMA Conference with our Whova app! Access everything you need in one spot: sessions, floor plans, evaluations, social media, and Mystic information. Download the Whova app from the App Store or Google Play. Open Whova, then search for "2026 NEMA Conference". Click on the conference, then click "Join Event". If it asks for a password, enter "NEMA2026CT". The conference app contains current room assignments.

### CONCURRENT SESSIONS
Secure your spot at conference sessions - arrive 5 minutes early and have a backup in mind if the room gets full.

### VISIT THE EXHIBIT HALL & LEARN
Wednesday, 8:00 am - 5:30 pm;
Thursday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
Embrace a wealth of knowledge in the dynamic and bustling NEMA Exhibit Hall, showcasing a wide array of products, services, and information. Find new products, network, grab coffee, meet non-profits and funders, connect with business leaders, and win raffle prizes. You don't want to miss out on all that is happening in the Exhibit Hall this year!

### SOCIAL MEDIA
Connect using #NEMA2026 and on the Whova community board.

### NEMA CONFERENCE BOOKSTORE
Wednesday, 10:30 am - 5:00 pm; Thursday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm; Friday 8:30 am - Noon
Discover interesting reads and museum swag at the Conference Bookstore to enhance your professional development.

### MAKE PLANS FOR BURLINGTON IN 2027!
Mark your calendar for the 2027 NEMA Conference, November 3-5, 2027 in Burlington, Vermont

### CAREER SUPPORT AREAS
Maximize your professional development by scheduling a one-on-one conversation with a leadership coach. Resume reviews will be available on Thursday, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm.

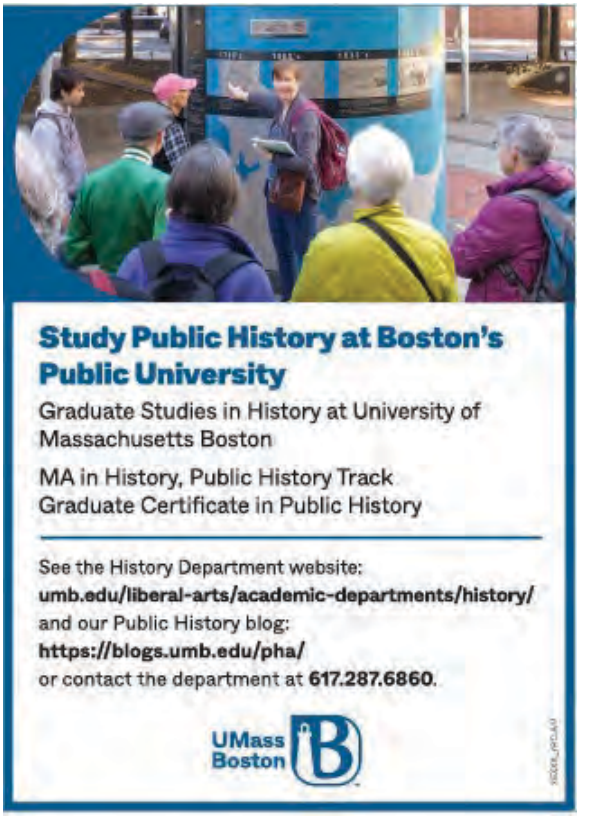
### RESTROOMS
All are welcome to use the restroom that is right for them.

### QUIET ROOM
Take a break from the hustle and bustle of conference sessions and networking when you step into conference room 4. Please no phone calls or Zooming in this area out of respect for your colleagues seeking respite.

### CODE OF CONDUCT
NEMA has a Code of Conduct for all of its events, whether in-person or online. All attendees agree to abide by the code in order for us to work together toward inclusion, safety, respect, and professionalism. Read the code here: nemanet.org/code-conduct.

### SESSION HANDOUTS
If presenters chose to share, session hand-outs will be added to the Whova app.

### QUESTIONS?
Visit the NEMA Registration Desk from Tuesday, 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm; Wednesday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm; Thursday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm; and Friday, 8:30 am - Noon. You can also use the Whova conference app; go to the Ask the Organizers Anything section under the Community tab.



# Tuesday, November 3

### Leading Together: Strengthening Executive Director–Board Partnerships for Museum Success

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Pre-registration required

A strong executive director–Board chair relationship is essential to an organization's health, resilience, and success. After a half-day workshop featuring case studies and interactive discussion, attendees will leave with a practical toolkit for ED–Chair collaboration, clearer role boundaries, and concrete, immediately implementable changes to strengthen alignment, trust, and institutional effectiveness.

In a period marked by political pressure, financial constraint, and heightened public scrutiny, the strength of the executive director–Board chair relationship has become a defining factor in a museum's ability to lead with integrity while remaining sustainable. This half-day pre-conference workshop is designed specifically for executive director–Board chair pairs to step out of day-to-day pressures and intentionally strengthen collaborative leadership.

The session will address common, often unspoken challenges: misalignment in roles and decision-making authority; breakdowns in communication and trust; navigating board dynamics, such as difficult members or "side-channel" influence; and balancing mission-driven leadership with financial realities. Participants will also explore how this partnership shapes institutional responses to complex issues, including contested narratives, community accountability, and the maintenance of relevance in a rapidly changing environment. Through a structured mix of facilitated exercises, peer discussion, and applied case work, each pair will: (1) clarify roles and shared expectations; (2) assess the current state of their working relationship; (3) practice tools for communication, delegation, and accountability; and (4) apply frameworks for addressing real-world governance challenges. Participants will work on their own current leadership dilemmas, such as board interference in operations, performance evaluation of the executive director, or managing conflict within the board, and leave with actionable strategies.

*Facilitators: Phelan Fretz, Principal, New England Museum Directors Roundtables, VT; Rebecca Shulman, Principal, Museum Questions Consulting, MD*

### Industrial History PAG Tour and Meet-Up

4:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Join the Industrial History PAG for their annual conference tour and meetup! Attendees will meet at the Mystic Marriott and carpool to Mystic for the tour. After the walk, participants will meet at a nearby restaurant. RSVP for free in advance; space is limited. Co-sponsored by Industrial History New England.

### Pre-registered? Arriving early?

Stop by the registration area between 5 pm – 7 pm on Tuesday to pick up your conference materials.



# Wednesday, November 4

8:00 am – 5:00 pm
## REGISTRATION OPEN

8:00 am – 5:30 pm
## EXHIBIT HALL OPEN

8:00 am – 8:30 am
## NEMA CONFERENCE PREVIEW
Attending the NEMA Conference for the first time? Join other first-time attendees to connect and learn how to make the most of it! Grab your morning coffee, then head to Mystic E & F for early networking, a conference overview, and helpful tips for maximizing your time at NEMA.

8:00 am – 9:00 am
## WAKE-UP COFFEE AND MORNING TREATS IN THE EXHIBIT HALL

10:30 am – 5:00 pm
## BOOKSTORE OPEN

10:30 am – 11:00 am
## COFFEE BREAK IN THE EXHIBIT HALL
Interested in leadership opportunities with NEMA? Meet members of the Board of Directors for an informal conversation over coffee about the "inner workings" of the association and discuss how you might help move the organization forward. Learn more about volunteering and other leadership opportunities. Grab your coffee and come on by!
Hosted by the NEMA Board

11:00 am – 12:30 pm
## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**Designing Sustainable Earned Income Around Audience Demand** (Room: My AD)
What if earned income felt less like a scramble and more like a natural extension of your work? Get briefed on the latest visitor data from the 2026 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers and learn what visitors want, what they are willing to pay for, and which experiences they associate with supporting your mission. Rethink your approach to earned income and develop ideas grounded

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9:00 am – 10:30 am

## KEYNOTE SESSION



**Pushing Against Expectations: Leadership, Risk, and the Work Beneath the Surface** (Room: Ma AC)

Museums are navigating forces that are not always visible on the surface: changing communities, shifting expectations, institutional traditions, questions of power, limited resources, and pressure to respond to a world that rarely stands still. How do we know when to adapt, when to challenge long-held assumptions, and when the risk of doing something different is worth taking?

Join NEMA for a keynote presentation and conversation with Harold Steward, Executive Director of the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), as we explore the undercurrents shaping museums and the broader cultural sector. Drawing on his experience across museums, the arts, organizing, and advocacy, Harold will reflect on what it means to lead from deeply held values while remaining willing to question the systems, practices, and expectations we inherit. What does it take to move beyond simply stating our values and begin living them through our decisions? How do we create space for experimentation, adaptation, and productive risk—and recognize when familiar ways of working are no longer enough?

Harold will invite us to think about leadership not simply as authority, but as a willingness to listen closely, share power, take thoughtful risks, and act on the values we claim. Together, we'll consider what each of us can do differently when the forces beneath the surface are calling for change.

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in real demand, then refine them through lively peer discussion.

*Speakers: Noël Koehn, Senior Consultant, Wilkening Consulting, WA; Amanda Goodheart Parks, Director of Education, New England Air Museum, CT (NEMA Board)*

### From "Don't Touch" to "You Belong!" Serving our Youngest Visitors in a Space that wasn't Designed for Them

(Room:My BC)

Join us for a deep dive into the world of youth programming and low-cost, high-impact exhibit design in a traditionally no-touch museum. This session's three parts will help you generate ideas to implement at your museum. 1) Presentations on development processes and planning tools for indoor and outdoor activities and exhibits. 2) Group discussions based on the challenges you face in designing for youth. 3) Hands-on opportunities at our tactile activity resource fair.

*Speakers: Christine Scales, Director of Education & Interpretation, Mollie Surprenant, School & Youth Programs Manager, and Sherlock Terry, Curatorial & Exhibits Manager, Billings Farm & Museum, VT*

### From ReSounding to Interco(a)stal: Curating with Community in the Undercurrents of Maritime History

(Room:C1)

Maine Maritime Museum's exhibit, *ReSounding*, marks a commitment to emphasizing undertold perspectives. Curators discuss the process of forming an advisory committee, collaborating with artists and scholars, and distilling complex histories into an accessible visitor experience. Partners from Atlantic Black Box discuss the importance of long-term relationship-building through the lens of Interco(a)stal, a yearlong historical recovery initiative that builds on the foundation laid by ReSounding. The project culminates as BIPOC artists and community partners reinterpret New England's largest outdoor sculpture, transforming a monument to shipbuilding into a site of inquiry, dialogue, and public memory.

*Speakers: Meadow Dibble, Founder and Executive Director, Atlantic Black Box, ME; Luke Gates-Milardo, Director of Exhibits & Learning, Maine Maritime Museum; Adilah Muhammad, Founder and Executive Director, The Third Place, ME; Sarah Timm, Peggy L. Osher Head of Education, Portland Museum of Art (former Director of Education, Maine Maritime Museum), ME*

**Historic Reimaginings: From Artifact to Story Using Responsible AI** (Room: C2)
What if artifacts could speak beyond the display label? This session introduces Historic Reimaginings, a framework that transforms primary sources into narrative-driven engagement using research, storytelling, and responsible AI. Through a real case study, participants will see how photorealistic historical images can bring artifacts to life, surface hidden histories, and deepen visitor connections, while addressing the ethical considerations of using AI in museum interpretation.

*Speaker: Aric Wilmunder, Independent Researcher and Author, A Well-Regulated Press, CA*

**Leaning Into "I Don't Know." How Museums Interpret Gaps in Their Historical Knowledge** (Room: C5)
Those of us working in museums would like to think we have the full picture and can answer any question thrown at us by a visitor. However, in most cases there are holes in the record, leading organizations to grapple with the inevitable unknown. How do we manage these issues? How can you lean into the gaps and make that a satisfying part of the interpretative story?

*Speakers: Stacia Hanscom, Director of Education & Public Programs, and Michelle Josephson, Digital Content Manager, Victoria Mansion, ME; Kathryn Leann Harris, Founder & CEO, Curator & Tour Guide, Interpreting Sports, MA; Kelvis Hernandez, John Brown House Museum Manager, Rhode Island Historical Society*

**Professional Development for Everyone: Increasing Access and Equity Across Museum Roles** (Room: C3)
This session explores how Discovery Museum reimagined professional development to make learning more accessible across the museum. Through an IMLS-funded initiative, we created a professional development program and learning library using flexible formats and delivery methods designed to meet employees where they are, regardless of role, schedule, or work location. We'll share what we learned along the way. Drawing on staff feedback and focus groups, we'll discuss what worked, what surprised us, what didn't, and how these lessons continue to shape our approach to learning and development. Participants will leave with practical ideas for expanding access to professional development and creating learning opportunities that fit their own institution's size, culture, and resources.

*Speakers: Stacey Brown, Principal, S Brown Consulting, MA; Ellen Sturgis, CFO, Discovery Museum, Inc., MA*

**The Generational Advantage: Harnessing Diverse Perspectives** (Room: C7)
Generational diversity in museum teams can be a hidden source of innovation if managed intentionally. This session explores how to recognize and leverage the unique strengths each generation brings. Attendees will learn strategies for encouraging collaboration, creative problem-solving, and knowledge-sharing. Real-world examples illustrate how multigenerational teams can exceed expectations and drive organizational impact. Participants will leave with actionable methods to transform diversity into a competitive advantage.

*Speaker: Krishna Powell, Founder and CEO, HR 4 Your Small Biz, NJ*

**The Miseducation of Academic Museums: A Creative Workshop on Reimagining Education as Enchantment** (Room: My EF)
In this half-case study, half-brainstorm workshop, we will guide participants through a series of activities that mirror the journey we embarked on as a staff of just eight, armed with a collection of works approximately 25k strong and a love of learning, to flip outdated ideas of museum education on their heads and cultivate a playground of curiosity, critical thinking, and belonging.

*Speakers: Rachel Moreau, Manager of Marketing and Communications, and Phil Morin, Manager of Campus and Community Engagement, Fleming Museum of Art at University of Vermont*

**The Museum Without Walls: Cultural Districts as Third Spaces for Civic Dialogue** (Room: Ma C)
Community cultural hubs increasingly function as "museums without walls." This session explores how a municipal coworking, meeting, and gallery space—and the broader Cultural District it helps support—create informal learning, civic dialogue, and creative exchange outside traditional museum structures. Through exhibitions, open mic storytelling, community art shows, art workshops, professional development opportunities, and cross-sector partnerships, participants will see how cultural spaces can foster critical thinking, welcome diverse voices, and remain financially sustainable while navigating political tensions and community expectations.

*Speakers: Stacey Zackin, Manager, WORK_SPACE: Municipal Coworking, Meeting & Gallery Space, CT; Kyle Shiel, AICP - Principal Planner for CRCOG - Capitol Region Council of Governments, CT*

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# Networking Lunch Sessions

12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

*Pick up your boxed lunch and meet colleagues at your choice of informal networking lunches. Lunches ordered in advance (see registration form) will be available in the Exhibit Hall. Box lunches will **not** be available for purchase on-site.*

**Academic Museums PAG** (Room: Ma A)
Join your PAG co-chairs and colleagues as we dive into all things academic. We'll chat over lunch and work toward developing the next phase of our programming based on your needs. Academic museums of all sizes are encouraged to attend!

*PAG Chairs: Carrie Cushman, Director, Bates College Museum of Art, ME; Ashley Offill, Curator of Collections, Hood Museum of Art, NH*

Hosted by GRLA 50 YEARS

**Curators PAG** (Room: My EF)
Join the Curators PAG for lunch and networking. We want to hear from you about the challenges, successes, and future directions of curatorial work.

*PAG Chairs: Tiffini Bowers, Assistant Director of Special Collections for Art and Exhibitions, John Hay Library, Brown University, RI (NEMA Board); Josephine Rodgers, PhD, Curator of Collections and Director of Engagement, Middlebury College Museum of Art, VT; Jessie Hilton, Curator, Lexington History Museums, MA*

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**Directors and Trustees Lunch** (Room: H)
Enjoy an opportunity to connect with fellow museum leaders from across New England. Directors and trustees at any point in their tenure, from newly appointed to well-established, are welcome to participate. This session is limited to directors/presidents/CEOs and trustees of museums and cultural organizations. Pre-registration is required.

Hosted by Museum Search & Reference EXECUTIVE SEARCH CONSULTING

**Open Lunch Discussion** (Room: C3)
Pick up your lunch and join a few companions for conversation in our open networking lunch zone.

**Registrars and Collections Care Specialists (RACCS) PAG: "In the Same Boat: Collections Wins, Woes, and Workarounds"** (Room: My BC) At a time when museums are being asked to do more with fewer resources and under greater scrutiny, this lunch offers a chance to draw on the collective experience of our peers: crowdsource ideas and solutions, commiserate over shared frustrations, and celebrate recent wins. As the conference considers how museums can uphold their missions and values in challenging times, this session will create a space for the people doing that work behind the scenes to connect with and encourage one another—and perhaps (gently) "push against the expectation" that collections professionals would rather eat lunch alone!

*PAG Chair: Megan Paqua, Registrar, Fairfield University Art Museum, CT*

Hosted by CROZIER

**BIPOC PAG** (Room: My AD)
Join your peers for a casual lunchtime, get-together. Swap stories, share advice, and meet fellow BIPOC colleagues at the beginning of this year's conference.
*PAG Members: Brindha Muniappan, Senior Director of the Museum Experience, The Discovery Museum, Acton, MA (NEMA Board Chair); Sage Morgan-Hubbard, formerly of the Museum of African American History, Boston, MA*



1:45 pm – 2:00 pm
## SESSION BREAK

1:45 pm – 4:30 pm
## OFF-SITE SESSION
### Mystic Seaport Museum Tour of Bricks and Boats

Please join us for a tour of Mystic Seaport Museum's newest traveling exhibition, *Brickwrecks: Sunken Ships in LEGO® Bricks,* and a sneak peek of the upcoming exhibit of the American Watercraft Collection in the Wells Boat Hall, featuring more than 175 small vessels from the museum's collection.

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm
## OFF-SITE SESSION
### "A Living Collection": Tour of the Connecticut College Arboretum

Curating a collection of living organisms, such as the trees that make up Connecticut College Arboretum (CCA), is all about balance. Unlike many museum collections, these "objects"—and the environment in which they are housed—are constantly growing and changing, no matter how much attention one gives them. This session will explore how CCA ensures living collection integrity and educational value for both current students and visitors, and for those living in a climatically different future. Attendees will explore how the CCA, and other institutions like it, ensure the collection is educationally valuable while balancing the needs of the public and the preservation of genetic and phenotypic diversity.




2:00 pm – 3:00 pm
## CONCURRENT SESSIONS
### Building Trust through Process for Independent Museum Professionals

(Room: Ma A)

Clients hire you once for expertise, but retain you because your process creates clarity, momentum, and confidence. Join us for a discussion focused on process. No matter what kind of museum work you do, we'll examine how repeat engagements and more referrals can come from how we work for our clients, not just what we know. Bring your questions and insights to our panel of IMPs for a discussion about process.

*Speakers: Phelan Fretz, Principal, Fretz Consulting Services, VT; Emily Robertson, Owner, Founder, Studio Robertson, MA; Amanda Wastrom, Senior Designer, Lily Pond Hill Creative Studio, MA*

### Create a SPARK—Try the Trades: Cultural Institutions as Centers for Trades and Craft Education (Room: C5)

Ready to SPARK excitement for skilled crafts and trades in your community? Join us for an inspiring session exploring how museums and cultural organizations can ignite a passion for making, building, and solving real-world problems among the next generation. Highlighting the dynamic collaboration between TradesUp and the Eric Sloane Museum, this session showcases creative outreach and engaging hands-on events that empower young people to discover rewarding experiences in the crafts and trades. Learn how you can get involved with this Connecticut-based non-profit and its community resource materials to bring TradesUp to your institution.

*Speaker: Andrew Rowand, Museum Curator & Site Administrator, Eric Sloane Museum, CT DECD State Museum*

### Defining Your Why: A Blueprint to Brand Success (Room: Ma B)

Most organizations can clearly explain what they do, but far fewer can articulate why it truly matters. Brand strategist Rachel Ballatori shares a practical framework for uncovering your organization's "why" and translating it into messaging that resonates with customers, employees, and partners. Attendees will leave with a blueprint for clarifying their brand narrative, strengthening differentiation, and communicating their value with confidence.

Speaker: Rachel Ballatori, Founder & CEO, Mill + Co., NH

### Dramatically Engaging the Revolution: Site-Specific Plays Opening Pathways to Move Beyond Myth (Room: C7)

Historic Deerfield and Connecticut's Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine worked with Plays in Place to create new site-specific plays that explore the Revolution-era stories of their sites to bring deeper engagement and conversation. They will discuss the process of creating and producing this exciting work that culminated in productions in July and August, all with a focus on the deep humanity of the people who engaged in the American Revolution.

*Speakers: Morgan Bengel, Curator & Site Administrator, Old New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine, CT; Claire Carlson, Director of Museum Education, Historic Deer ield, Inc., MA; Patrick Gabridge, Producing Artistic Director, Plays in Place, MA*

### ECoP Think Tank: Moving Our Field's Environment and Climate Work Forward Together (Room: My AD)

Join the Environment and Climate Community of Practice co-facilitators for table conversations about your environment and climate work with colleagues from across the region. Whether you're just starting out, don't know where to begin,
or have deep experience at the intersection of museums and sustainability, your voice is needed in this session. Bring your current sustainability challenge and work with tablemates to share skills, problem-solve, and network.

*Speakers: Paul Fenton, Director of Environmental and Outdoor Education, Discovery Museum, MA; Matt Kirchman, President & Creative Director, ObjectIDEA, NY*

### Hubs of Expertise: How Museum Professionals and Content Experts Create Programming Together (Room: My EF)

Are you eager to offer programs with content experts but worry that they might struggle to connect with your audience? As museums, we work to fulfill the civic responsibility fundamental to educational institutions and ensure our resources are accessible, relevant, and beneficial to society. See how the Harvard Museum of Natural History works with scientists to create strong communicators who share their research with visitors of all ages to the mutual benefit of all.

*Speakers: Federica Calabrese, Post-doctoral Researcher, and Ruth Tweedy, Graduate Student, Harvard University, MA; Javier Marín, Bilingual Museum Educator, Arielle Moon, Senior Museum Educator, Harvard Museums of Science and Culture, MA*

### Indigenous Collections Care (ICC) Guide: A Practical Tool (Room: C3)

Museums and academic institutions that steward Indigenous collections have an ethical responsibility to engage Indigenous voices and perspectives in collections care. A new resource for collections stewardship, the Indigenous Collections Care (ICC) Guide, provides a framework for museums and Indigenous communities to engage in conversations around culturally appropriate care. Knowing where to start can be challenging, but centering culturally appropriate care is a field-wide shift that everyone can be a part of.

*Speakers: Jaime Arsenault, Indigenous Enterprise; Nicolette Meister, Director and NAGPRA Coordinator, Logan Museum of Anthropology at Beloit College, WI; Marla Taylor, Curator of Collections, Robert S. Peabody Institute of Archaeology, MA*



**Our Failures as Well as Our Successes: Centering Underrepresented Communities in Controversial Times** (Room: Ma C)

In this session, panelists will draw on real experiences in museums, archives, and universities to examine and discuss how institutions can continue to center underrepresented communities in historical interpretation despite the significant challenges to this work in 2026 and likely beyond. Partnerships, collaborative approaches, and copious research can help historians secure allies, advance knowledge, and contribute meaningfully to exploring the diversity of American history.

*Speakers: Stacey Fraser, Assistant Curator, Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library, MA; Erica McAvoy, Assistant Editor, Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, MA; Elizabeth Mubarek, Collections Management Archivist, Brandeis University Library (Archives & Special Collections), MA*

**Succession Planning for Leadership Transitions** (Room: My BC)

Leadership transitions are high-risk moments in a museum's life cycle, yet succession planning is often delayed. This session reframes it as a shared governance responsibility, not a signal of departure. Panelists will outline key components, such as emergency continuity, interim leadership, decision-making, communications, and search readiness, while sharing practical examples and contemporary experiences. Participants will leave with a clear, actionable framework to strengthen succession planning and support organizational stability during transitions.

*Speakers: Laurie Pasteryak, Business Development Manager, and Dan Yaeger, Senior Search Consultant, Museum Search & Reference, CT/MA*

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

## SNACK BREAK IN THE EXHIBIT HALL

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3:30 pm – 4:30 pm

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

### 18th Century Buildings, 21st Century Tech: Bringing Historic Sites into the Future (Room: C5)

Visitors of historic sites have low expectations: volunteer talks, loosely curated and dated exhibits, and very little modern technology. But with advances in digital projection, light, and sound technology, museums and historic sites can revolutionize their visitors' experiences with minimal impact on historic structures. Using the transformation of Old South Meeting House into an immersive theater as an example, this session will explore engaging 21st-century takes on some of America's oldest historic spaces.

*Speakers: Chris Mellor, Creative Strategist, and Stephanie Stewart, Head of Creative, RLMG, MA; Matthew Wilding, Senior Director of Interpretation & Future Projects, Revolutionary Spaces, MA; Matt Zelkowitz, Executive Director, Built Environment, Available Light, MA*

### From Silos to Strategy: Aligning Marketing & Development to Drive Impact (Room: C3)

Marketing and development are often expected to collaborate—but rarely given the structure to do so effectively. This session explores how museums can break down silos to create aligned, mission-driven strategies that strengthen both fundraising and audience engagement. Through real examples and facilitated discussion, participants will gain practical tools to better integrate messaging, campaigns, and donor engagement efforts across teams.

*Speakers: Joseph April, Director of Development (NEMA Board), and Veronica Lester, Director of Marketing and Communications, Strawbery Banke Museum, NH*

### Monumental Decisions: Grappling with a Museum's Past to Preserve its Future (Room: Ma C)

Institutional decisions represent a museum's values at the time they're made. But values change, and museums, particularly those with lengthy histories, must grapple with past decisions to remain current. When one small museum transferred a problematic monument and the land it stands on to an inter-tribal organization earlier this year, they turned a liability into a mutually beneficial opportunity. Learn how this complex process worked and how it can be applied to other museums.

*Speakers: David Brule, President, Nolumbeka Project, MA; Ray Radigan, Curator, Memorial Hall Museum at Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, MA*

### So, You Want to Be a CEO (Room: C7)

Do you think museum leadership is in your future? Join a panel of current museum directors for a frank and open discussion of the demands and rewards of the role. Ask your burning questions about life in the corner office: Is it really all about fundraising? What do the panelists wish they had known before taking their first director role? What are the best (and most challenging) parts of the job? Meet other aspiring leaders and learn a bit about making the move up in the field.

*Speakers: Charles Clark, Executive Director, Castle Preservation Society, NH (NEMA Board); Adam Kane, Executive Director, Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium, VT; Heather Seger, Executive Director, Martha's Vineyard Museum, MA; Sarah Sosa-Acevedo, Executive Director, Wenham Museum, MA*

### The Librarium: How AI Can Open Doors for Any Museum (Room: Ma B)

Learn how AI can expand public access to collections and exhibits using an AI-powered museum greeter inspired by the digital librarian in the 2002 Hollywood film *The Time Machine.* Designed by ingenious software engineers volunteering with the EcoTarium Museum of Science and Nature, the "Librarium" presents museum content through engaging, low-latency interactions with a friendly animated avatar. Explore the Librarium's design and development, from early ideation and operational challenges to the incorporation of recent advances in AI.

*Speakers: Mario Ferero, Animator; Santiago Ferero, Developer; Karen Lankton Schmidt, Volunteer; Noreen Smith, President and CEO, EcoTarium Museum of Science and Nature, MA; Michael Schmidt, Volunteer*

### Volunteers as Stewards of Mission: Standing Firm in Uncertain Times (Room: My AD)

In this interactive session, participants will explore how volunteers are essential partners in helping museums stand firm in support of their missions during national uncertainty and heightened scrutiny. Through roundtable discussion and peer exchange, we'll discuss bold decisions, shared challenges, and creative strategies that position volunteers as educators,




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Madam C.J. Walker
Indianapolis, IN

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advocates, and community connectors. Attendees will leave with a collaboratively generated, actionable list of concrete ways volunteers can advance integrity, uplift diverse perspectives, and sustain impact.

*Speakers: Paul Geise, Volunteer; Andy King, Interpretation Volunteer Supervisor; Mary Koehler, Volunteer Services Manager; and Shawn Stiles, Volunteer, Mystic Seaport Museum, CT*

### Welcoming the Community to Your Museum: Impactful Programming that Fosters a Sense of Belonging (Room: My EF)

In times of uncertainty in the museum field, teams have had to pivot, take on new responsibilities, and rethink how to engage audiences. Changes in language, large shifts in staffing, and audience participation have presented challenges we haven't yet had to face. In this session, hear how teams have learned to lean into the mission of their museums to bolster programming and connect with their communities in new ways.

*Speakers: Polly Hubbard, Director of Education, Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East, Harvard Museums of Science & Culture, MA; Christina Moscat, Linde Family Director of Community Arts, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA*

### Where's the Party? Activating Museum Spaces for Private Events (Room: My BC)

In a time when museums face heightened scrutiny and financial pressures, this roundtable explores how institutions can reimagine their spaces as vital community hubs. Participants will share ideas and challenges in activating museum spaces for private events, fostering engagement, sustainability, and inclusive experiences that reinforce the museum's role as a relevant and resilient social institution.

*Speakers: Nathaniel Greene, Director, Annual Fund and Membership, and Aisha Jones, Group Sales & Custom Events Manager, Mystic Seaport Museum, CT; Aimee Harvey, Catering Sales Manager, Constellation Culinary, CT*


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# WEDNESDAY EVENING EVENTS

## EXHIBIT HALL OPENING RECEPTION



4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Join your colleagues at the opening reception in the Exhibit Hall. It's the perfect opportunity to catch up with old acquaintances, make new friends, network with colleagues, and visit the vendors. And let's not forget about the raffle cards—get them signed early for a chance to win some amazing prizes on Thursday!

Grab some delicious hors d'oeuvres and enjoy the kick-off celebration for the NEMA Exhibit Hall.

Hosted by SAQA GLOBAL EXHIBITIONS



## AN EVENING AT MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM

Join us at the 2026 NEMA Conference Opening Reception at Mystic Seaport Museum. Attendees will have the opportunity to see two popular exhibitions — *Brickwrecks: Sunken Ships in LEGO® Bricks*, and *Monstrous: Whaling and Its Colossal Impact*, featuring highlights from the museum's incomparable collection.



Pre-registered guests will also be able to explore on board and below decks of the *Charles W. Morgan*, the last wooden whaleship in the world.

Meet outside Hotel Main Entrance by 5:30pm to board the bus.

Hosted by ARK



## MEET-UPS

Want to arrange your own opportunities to connect? Interested in meeting colleagues outside the hotel and after hours? Use our conference app, Whova, to plan your own low-key gatherings and get-togethers at local bars and restaurants in Mystic!

# FINDING THE BEST MUSEUM LEADERS

## Search Services

Our full range of services includes preparing job announcements, placing ads, active recruiting, thoroughly vetting candidates, as well as helping you with the offer and onboarding.

## Transition Management

Managing transition goes hand-in-hand with leadership changes. We support a well-managed path for successful tenures.

## Why choose us?

Our team of former museum leaders know the field inside and out. We understand executive leadership and the challenges of today's job market.

## Museum Search & Reference

EXECUTIVE SEARCH CONSULTING

*For over 20 years, MS&R has provided recruiting and search services to support leadership transitions for museum executives and other senior management roles.*

*Our firm's international network and trusted relationships help us to quickly connect museums with talented candidates.*

*Clients value our service and partnership from the announcement and recruiting through interviews, offers, and onboarding. We're by your side from start to finish.*

**To view openings and recent placements, visit:**
**museum-search.com**

searchandref@museum-search.com www.museum-search.com

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# Thursday, November 5

7:30 am - 8:30 am

## INDEPENDENT MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS BREAKFAST

**Being a Successful Consultant Today** (Room: Ma A)

Pre-registration required

Independent museum consultants must deliver more than expertise. They must drive measurable results, integrate complex organizational needs, and build trust through a disciplined process. Our breakfast explores how consultants can align mission and revenue, connect strategy across programs, facilities, and governance, and use clear frameworks to guide decision-making. Participants will gain practical approaches for demonstrating value, facilitating alignment, and creating lasting impact in today's increasingly complex and resource-constrained museum environment.

*PAG Chairs: Phelan Fretz, Facilitator, Museum Directors Roundtables, VT; Emily Robertson, Owner, Studio Robertson, MA*

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

## REGISTRATION AND BOOKSTORE OPEN

8:00 am – 4:00 pm

## EXHIBIT HALL OPEN (Room: Ma DF)

8:00 am – 9:00 am

## WAKE-UP COFFEE AND MORNING TREATS IN THE EXHIBIT HALL (Room: Ma DF)



8:15 am – 8:45 am

## LGBTQIA+ MEET-UP (Room: My AD)



Gather with fellow members of the LGBTQIA+ community for a casual meet-and-greet! Start your day off with coffee and colleagues, say "hello" to PAG co-chairs Ali Kane and Phil Morin, and make personal connections to enhance your professional life!

9:00 am – 10:30 am

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**African Objects, Visibility, and Ethical Practice: Lessons from a University Teaching Collection** (Room: C1)

Public discourse relating to African objects in museums and other collections outside the African continent has recently prompted critical reflection. Four years ago, faculty, staff, and students from Wesleyan University founded the African Material Cultures project to surface African objects from collections across campus. This panel will present our work to process, research, and teach with these objects in ways that enhance ongoing conversations around race, diversity, and the visibility of Africa on campus.

*Speakers: Myka Modeste, Undergraduate Student/Collections Assistant; Wendi Field Murray, Archaeology Collections Manager; and Laura Ann Twagira, Associate Professor of History, Co-Chair of African Studies, Wesleyan University; Adam Mohn, Collections Database Coordinator, Raclin Murphy Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, IN*

**Amplifying Youth Voice Across Science and Nature Museums** (Room: C5)

Staff members from the ECHO Leahy Center for Lake Champlain and the Lake Champlain Basin Program will discuss their joint efforts to improve how their organizations provide opportunities for adolescents in their community to strengthen their science identity. They will share the methods they used, what they are doing to expand on their initial efforts, and discuss how you might approach doing something similar within your organization.

*Speakers: Kristen Balschunat, Lake Champlain Resource Room Coordinator, Patrick Leahy Lake Champlain Basin Program & NEIWPCC, VT; Julie Kozak, Educator and Teen Internship Coordinator, ECHO Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, VT*

**Get Up & Explore! Using a Giant Map to Connect Communities** (Room: Ma B)

Want to see a really, really big map? Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's Giant Map is a 27' by 35' floor map of the Lake Champlain Watershed used to engage communities in place-based learning. This session will focus

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on using large-scale maps and kinesthetic education programs with visitors of all ages. Session participants get to explore the map, try out a variety of lesson plans, and learn how to implement similar programs at their own institution.

*Speaker: Meghan Bartholomew, Education Programs Manager, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, VT*

### How to Build and Sustain an Awesome Board (Room: My AD)

Creating an awesome board takes time and effort. Yes, boards need job descriptions, committee charters, and expectations documents; clear and consistent communication; and meetings that are purposeful and allow for generative discussions. But those structures are not enough! This panel will look at the human component of board engagement: thoughtful recruitment, ongoing engagement and education, reflective practice and self-assessment, strong relationships with leadership, and finding joy in the work.

*Speakers: Robert Burns, Director, Mattatuck Museum, CT; Amy Devin, Immediate Past President, History Cambridge, MA; Becca McBee, Director of Board Relations, Mystic Seaport Museum, CT; Laura B. Roberts, Principal, Roberts Consulting, MA*

### Interpreting the Body in Historic House Museums (Room: C3)

Historic houses are intimate spaces where visitors can explore people's eating habits, sleeping arrangements, and relationships through the lens of their home. Curiously, though, explicit discussions of the physical body are often absent, especially when we consider stories of disability and mental health. This panel will consider how these museums approach this work and interpret these stories with care and compassion. We will discuss the challenges and successes and what we hope to do next.

*Speakers: Jane Bird, Interim Museum Director, Lippitt House Museum, RI; Meghan Gelardi Holmes, Executive Director for Properties & Collections, Prescott House (NSCDA-MA), MA; Rebecca Lo Presti, History PhD Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst; Hailey Robbins, Curator & Development Director, Gibson House Museum, MA*



### "Little 'e' Evaluation": Using "Just Enough" Visitor Data to Test Your Expectations (Room: My EF)

Half your team knows visitors will love your planned program or exhibit. The rest know they'll hate it.* Little "e" evaluation to the rescue! Your visitors will tell you what they know, care about, and are ready to learn. Hear how practical DIY evaluation helped end debates, drive decisions, save an exhibit from insurance adjusters, and even attract funding. You'll come away with templates to try back in your museum. (*You might all be wrong!)

*Speakers: Betsy Loring, Principal, expLoring exhibits & engagement, MA; Elisabeth Nevins, Principal, Seed Education Consulting, MA*

### More Than Show and Tell! Collections Programs for Kids (Room: My BC)

So you want to talk to youngsters? Learn from a hands-on museum how to run an object-centered program that is more than a scavenger hunt or simple show and tell. Join us in our introductory workshop covering how you can engage diverse audiences in interesting and novel ways of using collections and archival objects. After the main demonstration of a dynamic object-centered, repatriation-focused program from Boston Children's Museum, participants will be invited to workshop program ideas from their own unique institutions.

*Speakers: James Margotta, Collections Assistant; Savannah McMullen, Senior Educator, Empathy, Equity, and Identity; and Sean Plaistowe, Director of Collections and Archives, Boston Children's Museum, MA*

### Regional Museums, Global Lessons: How Three Institutions Are Enhancing Their Narratives While Upgrading Facilities (Room: C2)

Genesee Country Village & Museum, Kennebunk's Brick Store Museum, and the Mark Twain House & Museum explore how their local narratives resonate on a worldwide stage and the challenges and opportunities that each museum has faced in expanding their mission while dealing with the realities of accessibility, operational, deferred maintenance, collections, exhibits, and programs.

*Speakers: Chris Muskopf, Principal, CambridgeSeven, MA; Daryn Reyman-Lock, Beatrice Fox Auerbach Chief Curator, Mark Twain House Museum, CT; Cynthia Walker, Executive Director, Brick Store Museum, ME (NEMA Board); Becky Wehle, President and CEO, Genesee Country Village & Museum, NY*

### The Power of Curiosity: Leading Through Uncertainty (Room: Ma C)

In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world, leaders often default to quick answers to create stability, but the most effective seek to understand before drawing conclusions. This session explores curiosity as a powerful leadership practice that strengthens trust, expands perspective, and improves decision-making. Through insights from museum leaders, participants at any level will gain practical strategies to ask, listen, and lead with intention, fostering resilience, collaboration, and innovation across their organizations.

*Speakers: Marie Beam, CEO, Discovery Museum, MA; Jennifer DePrizio, Executive Director, NEMA, MA; Andrew Eschelbacher, Deputy Director and Head of Art and Exhibitions, Portland Museum of Art, ME; Linnea Grim, President and CEO, Strawbery Banke, NH*




9:15 am – Noon

## OFF-SITE SESSION

### Mystic Museum of Art Tour and Printmaking Workshop

Pre-registration required. Meet outside the Main Entrance of the Marriott Hotel by 9am to board the bus.

Join a curator's tour of Mystic Museum of Art's (MMA) newly opened exhibition featuring Mystic artists who were part of the WPA program. Inspired by the conversation and these works of art, participants will create a monotype in the museum's studios overlooking the Mystic River. This painterly and versatile printmaking technique allows for flexibility and freedom using drawing and painting methods. The process encourages experimentation with a variety of materials and methods, often resulting in spontaneous and surprising outcomes.

MMA has served as a focal point for the arts in southeastern Connecticut for more than 100 years. Founded in 1913 as the Mystic Art Association, the museum today engages visitors in richly curated exhibitions, interpretive activities, studio classes, and outreach programs. MMA's mission is to inspire creativity and critical dialogue by engaging the regional community in the understanding, appreciation, and practice of visual art.

10:30 am – 11:00 am

## COFFEE BREAK IN THE EXHIBIT HALL (Room: Ma DF)

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

### Beyond the Script: Group Tours that Spark Dialogue and Critical Thinking

(Room: Ma C)

How can group tours spark dialogue and critical thinking? This interactive roundtable explores strategies for designing engaging, audience-centered experiences for diverse age groups.



Participants will examine how to balance institutional mission, visitor engagement, and complex content while fostering independent thought. Through facilitated discussion and peer exchange, attendees will gain practical approaches, shared insights, and inspiration to create tours that challenge assumptions, encourage dialogue, and deepen meaningful visitor engagement.

*Speakers: Suzi Fonda, Director of Education, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum, MA; Taryn McNichol, Operations, Communications, Group Tours, Mapparium, MA; Kellian Adams Pletcher, Director of GLAM Innovation, FableVision, MA*

### Career Support: Resume Review

(Room: MA A)

You excel at your job, but does your resume reflect all your hard work?

Sign-up at the registration desk to get a fresh pair of eyes and some collegial advice on your most recent resume!

### Digital Collections Management and Public Access for All: Expanding Connecticut's Open-Source Collections Collaborative

(Room: Ma B)

Join us for an interactive exploration of Connecticut Collections, a collaborative platform for collections management and public access built on CollectiveAccess and run by the Connecticut League of Museums. We will provide an orientation to the project, show how it is helping a range of collecting institutions, and discuss prospects for expanding the project to serve the region. Participants will explore the public portal and the back end of the database on their laptops.

*Speakers: Patti Folsom, Trustee and Museum Volunteer, Finnish American Heritage Society; Diane Lee, Collections Manager, Fair ield Museum and History Center, CT; Charlotte Le land, Collection Manager, Housatonic Museum of Art, CT; Kaz Kozlowski, Volunteer, Finnish American Heritage Society, CT; Dana Meyer, Membership & Digital Projects Manager, and Amrys Williams, Executive Director, Connecticut League of Museums; Jodi Polsgrove, Curator of Collections, Connecticut SHPO Museums*

**Don't Let History Repeat Itself: How to Handle a Crisis, Disaster, or Emergency Event with Con idence** (Room: My EF)
This hands-on session challenges your museum's existing emergency plans. Engage in realistic role-playing scenarios for diverse museum crises. This session aims to empower participants with a clear, actionable strategy for effective emergency management when seconds count and to ensure the safety of your staff, visitors, and invaluable collections.

*Speakers: Andrew Bassier, Assistant Vice President – Fine Art & Specialty Risk, and Ashley Mehyo, Vice President, Claims, Distinguished, Fine Art and Collectibles, NY; Emily Pearce, Executive Director, Schooner Adventures, MA (NEMA Board)*

**From Visitor to Steward: How Museums Cultivate a Philanthropic Mindset** (Room: C5)
Museums often focus their fundraising efforts on identifying and soliciting major donors. But what if the most important question is not how to find major donors, but how to create them?
*Speaker: Alexis Salsedo-Surovov, Associate Dean of Institutional Advancement, Housatonic Community College Foundation, CT*

**Interpreting Early Black History at Historic Sites: Where Do We Go from Here?** (Room: My BC)
Over the last six years, many museums saw the events of 2020 as a call to bring the stories of enslavement and freedom into the narrative of their institutions. Where does that work stand today? Is the current political climate affecting your work, either positively or negatively? This roundtable will offer participants the opportunity to discuss a variety of aspects of this work, including research challenges, partnering with communities, and the challenges of bringing this interpretation to the public.
*Speakers: Stacia Hanscom, Director of Education & Public Programs, Victoria Mansion, ME; Kelvis Hernandez, John Brown House Museum Manager, Rhode Island Historical Society; Karen Sanchez-Eppler, President of the Board of Directors, Porter-Phelps-Huntington Foundation, MA*

**Responding to the Undercurrents: Museums, Community, and Resilience in Volatile Times** (Room: My AD)
Museums are vital to healthy communities, but it can be difficult to clearly explain why. This interactive workshop will help participants find the language to articulate and defend the value of museums—especially during challenging times. Attendees will engage in guided thought exercises that explore what only museums can offer and how they support staff and community goals related to wellness, safety, education, and connection. Participants will leave better prepared to advocate for both the field and their own institutions.
*Speaker: Kajette Solomon, Social Equity & Inclusion Specialist, RISD Museum*

**Storytelling and Systems Thinking for Museum Professionals** (Room: C1)
What makes a great story vs a so so one? How about a great pitch vs a pretty good pitch? This session offers a behind-the-scenes look at how he crafts stories for theatre, video and podcasts to support exhibits and bolster online content. Participants will choose what type of communication they most need support with (for example, a pitch, story or difficult conversation) and then practice in pairs. In the process, you will learn about how your message might be adapted for audiences like your Board, the media, the public, a senior colleague, etc. You will also experience how much body language can support your efforts! Sharing with the whole group is not required.
*Speaker: Jonathan Mirin, Artistic Director, Piti Theatre Company, MA*

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### Student-Centered Success in Challenging Museum Conditions (Room: C7)

This session invites participants to interrogate the ways we measure success in museum education and reflect on the ways institutional assumptions about success can unintentionally lead us to view roadblocks—difficult content, funding pressures, institutional interests, and even physical spaces—as permanent dead ends. Staff from these two very different museums will model approaches to innovating and advocating for meaningful educational programs in challenging museum spaces. Participants may experience these models through a facilitated paper quilt activity.

*Speakers: Erin Bartram, Associate Director for Education; Ella Walsh, Assistant Manager of Interpretation for Education, The Mark Twain House & Museum, CT; Kate Pritchard, Director of Education, Currier Museum of Art, NH*

### Un-Silencing History: Affordable Multimedia Storytelling for Inclusive Narratives

How can museums uplift silenced voices amid pressure to sanitize narratives and limited funding? This 90-minute workshop empowers professionals to challenge the status quo through accessible multimedia storytelling. Using examples from the speaker's consultation on the MFA Boston's new Art of the Americas wing, an art history "Juneteenth" address, a presentation at Old North Church about Paul Revere's Ride, an augmented reality colonial history project, and a Native American artist video for the Concord Museum, attendees will learn tips for crafting inclusive narratives. Participants will also explore practical, low-barrier video techniques to independently generate digital content that serves communities, champions historical truths, and pushes against expectations.

*Speaker: Roberto Mighty, PBS Producer & Museum Multimedia Artist, Celestial Media, MA*

1:45 pm – 2:00 pm

## SESSION BREAK







critical thinking
collaboration
creativity



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# Networking Lunch Sessions

12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

*Pick up your boxed lunch and meet colleagues at your choice of informal networking lunches. Lunches ordered in advance will be available in the Exhibit Hall.*

*Box lunches are **not** available for purchase on-site.*

**Industrial History Organizations PAG** (Room: C5)
Join other industrial history colleagues for a discussion with William N. Peterson, a highly regarded maritime historian, author, and curator emeritus at the Mystic Seaport Museum. He is best known for his extensive research on the region's shipbuilding heritage and his foundational books on Connecticut's maritime past. Co-presented with Industrial History New England.

*PAG Chairs: Kristy Ellsworth, Director of Education, Manchester Historic Association, NH; Eric Peterson, Retired Museum Person, MA*

**Education PAG** (Room: Ma A)
Meet with your new PAG chairs and connect with fellow educators. Discuss strategies for engaging museum audiences, share ideas, offer advice, and connect with a network of peers who can continue to provide inspiration, support, and resources long after this year's conference ends.

*PAG Chairs: Suzi Fonda, Director of Education, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum, MA; Kellian Adams Pletcher, Director of GLAM Innovation, FableVision, MA*

Hosted by LIBRARY OF CONGRESS TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES Regional Program

**Exhibitions PAG** (Room: My BC)
Whether exhibits are your full-time job, one of many duties, or just an interest of yours, join us for lunch! Come network and help brainstorm upcoming Exhibit PAG activities, including future workshops, conference sessions, meet-ups, and field trips.

*PAG Chair: Dorothy Rivera, Manager of Research and Exhibits, The Mary Baker Eddy Library, MA*

Hosted by

42 | design fab

**Internship CoP** (Room: Ma B)
Does your organization host interns, are you thinking of hosting interns, or are curious about internship programs? Do you have questions or need to vent? Join us for the Internship CoP lunch to eat and chat about all things interns.

*CoP Chair: Alissa Butler, Study Center Manager, Historic New England, MA*

**The Museum Directors' Discussion** (Room: My AD)
This is an opportunity for CEOs/Directors to discuss concerns and challenges in an open forum setting. Our facilitator will keep the conversation moving while we share ideas and solutions. Whether you are a seasoned or first-time director, this discussion is for CEOs/Directors of museums of any size. Participation is limited to CEO/Directors.

*Facilitator: Adam Kane, Executive Director, Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium, VT*

Hosted by CORGAN

**Small Museums PAG** (Room: My EF)
Gather with small museum friends, old and new, near and far! We'll chat about the successes and challenges unique to our sector of the field.

*PAG Chairs: Samantha DePergola, Assistant Director of Storrowton Village Museum, Eastern States Exposition, MA; Doria Hughes, Archivist & Collection Manager, Rosemarie Beck Foundation, NY; Louise Reilly Sacco, Permanent Acting Interim Executive Director, Museum Of Bad Art, MA*

**Open Lunch Discussion** (Room: C3)
Pick up your lunch and join a few companions for conversation in our open networking lunch zone.

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2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

### Community-Based Approaches to Interpreting Slave Quarters at Massachusetts Historic Sites (Room: Ma B)

When the Shirley-Eustis House and the Marblehead Museum identified detached slave quarters structures at their sites, they undertook similar yet different journeys to improve their interpretation of enslavement and incorporate their community's diverse perspectives in the discussion. The site directors will engage in conversation with each other and audience members, to explore their successes and stumbles and share ideas for adaptation and experimentation at your site.

*Speakers: Suzy Buchanan, Executive Director, Shirley-Eustis House, MA; Kristin Gallas, Principal, MUSE Consulting, MA; Lauren McCormack, Executive Director, Freedom's Way (Former Executive Director, Marblehead Museum), MA*

### Engaging Communities in a Time of Turmoil: How the Peabody Essex Museum Is Doubling Down on Inclusivity (Room: C7)

Meaningfully engaging communities today requires a coordinated, multi-layered approach—where exhibitions spark dialogue, partnerships build trust, youth programs create pathways, and initiatives expand relevance beyond traditional audiences. This panel will discuss PEM's multipronged approach to advancing engagement with a diverse cadre of communities, including students, educators, young artists of color, and Latinx and LGBTQIA+ communities, followed by a Q&A and dialogue with attendees.

*Speakers: Lillian Santiago, Public Programming Coordinator; Danielle Phillips, Director of Programming; David Snider, Director of Learning & Community Engagement; and Hannah Varden, Community Engagement Manager, Peabody Essex Museum, MA*

### Lessons from the Thoreau Alliance Merger: Uniting an Author's Birthplace with a Global Literary Society (Room: C1)

In January 2026, the Thoreau Alliance merged the Thoreau Society and Thoreau Farm—Henry David Thoreau's birthplace—after decades of collaboration and two years of exploration and planning. This panel addresses why this merger happened now, (continued on page 28)

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Learn more: **bu.edu/met/NEMA**

# Quick Glance

## Tuesday

Leading Together: Strengthening Executive Director–Board Partnerships for Museum Success
Industrial History PAG Tour and Meet-Up
**Early-registration opens from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

## Wednesday

**8:00 am – 5:00 pm**
**Registration Open**

**8:00 am – 5:30 pm**
**Exhibit Hall Open**

**8:00 am – 8:30 am**
**NEMA Conference Preview**

**8:00 am – 9:00 am**
**Wake-Up Coffee and Morning Treats in the Exhibit Hall**

**9:00 am – 10:30 am**
**Keynote Session**
- Pushing Against Expectations: Leadership, Risk, and the Work Beneath the Surface

**10:30 am – 5:00 pm**
**Bookstore Open**

**10:30 am – 11:00 am**
**Coffee Break in the Exhibit Hall**

**11:00 am – 12:30 pm**
**Concurrent Sessions**
- Designing Sustainable Earned Income Around Audience Demand
- From "Don't Touch" to "You Belong!"
- From ReSounding to Interco(a)stal
- Historic Reimaginings
- Leaning Into "I Don't Know"
- Professional Development for Everyone
- The Generational Advantage
- The Miseducation of Academic Museums
- The Museum Without Walls

**12:30 pm – 1:45 pm**
**Networking Lunch Sessions**
- Academic Museums PAG, hosted by Gorman Richardson Lewis Architects
- Curators PAG, hosted by NEDCC
- Directors & Trustees Lunch, hosted by Museum Search & Reference
- RACCS PAG, hosted by Crozier
- Open Lunch Discussion
- BIPOC PAG

**1:45 pm – 2:00 pm**
**Session Break**

**1:45 pm – 4:30 pm**
**Off-Site Session**
- Mystic Seaport Museum Tour of *Bricks and Boats*

**2:00 pm – 5:00 pm**
**Off-Site Session**
- "A Living Collection": Tour of the Connecticut College Arboretum

**2:00 pm – 3:00 pm**
**Concurrent Sessions**
- Building Trust through Process for IMPs
- Create a SPARK—Try the Trades
- Defining Your Why
- Dramatically Engaging the Revolution
- ECoP Think Tank
- Hubs of Expertise
- Indigenous Collections Care Guide
- Our Failures as Well as Our Successes
- Succession Planning

**3:00 pm – 3:30 pm**
**Snack Break in the Exhibit Hall**

**3:30 pm – 4:30 pm**
**Concurrent Sessions**
- 18th Century Buildings, 21st Century Tech
- From Silos to Strategy
- Monumental Decisions
- So, You Want to Be a CEO
- The Librarium
- Volunteers as Stewards of Mission
- Welcoming the Community to Your Museum
- Where's the Party?

**4:30 pm – 5:30 pm**
**Exhibit Hall Opening Reception**
Hosted by SAQA Global Exhibitions

**Wednesday Evening Events**
- An Evening at Mystic Seaport Museum: 5:45 pm - 7:45 pm
- Informal Meet-ups

## Thursday

**7:30 am – 8:30 am**
**IMP PAG Breakfast**
- Being a Successful Consultant Today

**8:00 am – 5:00 pm**
**Registration & Bookstore Open**

**8:00 am – 3:45 pm**
**Exhibit Hall Open**

**8:00 am – 9:00 am**
**Wake-Up Coffee and Morning Treats in the Exhibit Hall**

**8:15 am – 8:45 am**
**LGBTQIA+ Meet-Up**

**9:00 am – 10:30 am**
**Concurrent Sessions**
- African Objects, Visibility, and Ethical Practice
- Amplifying Youth Voice
- Get Up & Explore!
- How to Build and Sustain an Awesome Board
- Interpreting the Body in Historic House Museums
- "Little 'e' Evaluation"
- More Than Show and Tell!
- Regional Museums, Global Lessons
- The Power of Curiosity

**9:15 am – Noon**
**Off-Site Session**
- Mystic Museum of Art Tour and Printmaking Workshop

**10:30 am – 11:00 am**
**Coffee Break in the Exhibit Hall**

**11:00 am – 12:30 pm**
**Concurrent Sessions**
- Beyond the Script
- Career Support: Resume Review
- Digital Collections Management and Public Access for All
- Don't Let History Repeat Itself
- From Visitor to Steward
- Interpreting Early Black History at Historic Sites
- Responding to the Undercurrents
- Storytelling and Systems Thinking for Museum Professionals
- Student-Centered Success in Challenging Museum Conditions
- Un-Silencing History

**12:30 pm – 1:45 pm**
**Networking Lunch Sessions**

- Industrial History Organizations PAG
- Education PAG, hosted by Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program
- Exhibitions PAG, hosted by 42 | design fab studio, inc.
- Internship CoP
- The Museum Directors' Discussion, hosted by Corgan
- Small Museums PAG
- Open Lunch Discussion

**1:45 pm – 2:00 pm**
**Session Break**

**2:00 pm - 3:00 pm**
**Concurrent Sessions**

- Community-Based Approaches to Interpreting Slave Quarters
- Engaging Communities in a Time of Turmoil
- Lessons from the Thoreau Alliance Merger
- Panel on Climate Change Summit
- Ready or Not: Communicating Through Crisis
- Removing Economic Barriers
- Talking Pictures
- The Path to Museum Leadership Starts with Fundraising
- Unlocking the Past
- Who Says? Including Staff in Critical Decision-Making

**3:00 pm – 3:45 pm**
**Exhibit Hall Closing Reception and Raffle Prize Drawing**
Hosted by Harvard Extension School, Graduate Program in Museum Studies

**3:45 pm – 5:15 pm**
**Concurrent Sessions**

- Activating a Grassroots Collections Revolution
- Centering Justice-Impacted Voices
- Cultural Intelligence
- Educators on the Front Line
- From Ideas to Institutions
- Not Just Smart—Responsible
- Ride the Waves of Uncertainty Without Losing Yourself
- Shaping Teen Programs through Collaborative Design
- Why Is This Even Here?

**5:15 pm – 6:00 pm**
**Newcomers Reception**
Hosted by Tufts University Museum Studies Program

**Evening Events**

- Moonlight on the Lieutenant: An Evening at the Florence Griswold Museum from 5:45 pm - 8:00 pm, hosted by Distinguished
- NEMA Night at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm, hosted by Corgan
- Informal Meet-ups

# Friday

**8:30 am – Noon**
**Registration & Bookstore Open**

**8:30 am – 9:00 am**
**Wake-Up Coffee and Morning Treats**

**8:30 am – 11:45 am**
**Off-Site Session**

- *Canterbury Female Boarding School: Courage, Conscience, & Continuance* Exhibit Tour and Conversation at the Prudence Crandall Museum

**9:00 am – 10:00 am**
**Concurrent Sessions**

- From Sanctuary to Stewardship
- Just Do It!
- Re-Establishing a Tribal Museum Archive
- Reframe, Relaunch, Reconnect
- Rising to the Challenge
- Surfacing Black History:
- Teaching Calm

**10:15 am – 11:15 am**
**Concurrent Sessions**

- Reimagining Place
- Historic Decarbonization
- How to Run a Great Board Meeting
- Is It Haunted?
- Leading Through Uncertainty
- Revolutionary Conversations
- Speed Dating for Community Partnerships
- Welcoming Adults with Cognitive and Intellectual Disabilities

**11:15 am – 11:30 am**
**Session Break**

**11:30 am – 12:30 pm**
**Concurrent Sessions**

- Advisory Groups
- Community in Action
- Courage, Resilience, and Self-Liberation
- History as a Springboard
- Keeping Collections from Going the Way of the Dinosaurs
- Leadership Is a Team Sport
- Let's Put a Label on It!
- Rebels, Tories, and Untold Stories
- "Who Is Missing in Bar Harbor?"

**12:30 pm – 2:00 pm**
**Closing Luncheon and Excellence Awards**



This panel addresses why this merger happened now, as cultural organizations face mounting financial, social, and intellectual pressures. Panelists share lessons learned about integrating governance, sustaining inclusive communities, and effectively communicating change, offering a timely case study in how values-driven partnerships can strengthen resilience, expand access, and deepen impact.
*Speakers: Court Booth, Co-President of the Board, John Kucich, Co-President of the Board, and Rebecca Migdal, Executive Director, The Thoreau Alliance, MA; Michele Levy, President & Brand Strategist, Caravan Brand Partners, MA*

### Panel on Climate Change Summit

(Room: C3)

Climate change is evolving rapidly, and in the absence of federal action, museums are positioned to influence public attitudes. This summer, a unique gathering of leaders from national and regional museum organizations discussed the issue of climate change and its impacts on our field. Convened by the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums and sponsored by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, several organizations, including NEMA, were partners. This session reports the summit's findings and opens audience discussion of what we can do as individual organizations both for ourselves and in service of the public.

*Speakers: Raney Bench, Executive Director, Mount Desert Island Historical Society, ME (NEMA Board); Paul Fenton, Director of Environmental and Outdoor Education, Discovery Museum, MA; Pieter Roos, Faculty, Cooperstown Graduate Program, State University of New York Oneonta; Rodney Rowland, Director of Environmental Sustainability, Strawbery Banke Museum, NH*

### Ready or Not: Communicating Through Crisis (Room: C5)

Escaped apex predator (clouded leopard); emotionally volatile exhibition (the Enola Gay); controversial and detrimental donors (Sackler, Koch, Behring). If you work in museums long enough, especially those causing good trouble, crisis finds you. Drawing on more than 50 years of combined experience, this session offers three hard-won lessons in communicating with speed, honesty, flexibility, and confidence. You'll learn three practical tools you can put into practice Monday morning, before the next crisis arrives.
*Speakers: Amy Kehs, Museum Communications Strategist, Kehs Communications, MD; John Gibbons, Museum Communications Professional, Winslow Crocker House and Heritage Museums and Gardens, ME/MA*

### Removing Economic Barriers: Making the Transition to Free Admission (Room: Ma A)

Interested in making admission to your organization free? Learn about removing economic barriers for your visitors and how to speak to your donors about supporting free admission from the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and Fitchburg Art Museum.

*Speakers: Colleen Chambers, Visitor Services Lead, and Sharon Fantl, Director of Development, Fitchburg Art Museum, MA; Katharine Noiva, Director of Visitor Experience & Learning; Lauren Ross, Director of Development, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, VT*

### Talking Pictures: Photography, Oral History, and Remembering 1976

(Room: My EF)

To commemorate the 250th anniversary of the U.S., the Boston Athenaeum curated *Where's Boston? 50 Years Later*, an exhibition based on the photography of Constantine Manos displayed at the 1976 Boston Bicentennial pavilion. The curatorial team identified individuals in the photographs, ultimately interviewing *more than* a dozen whose recollections of that time were included in the exhibition. Learn more about the process of collecting the oral histories and creating a more enriching visitor experience.
*Speakers: Lauren Graves, Associate Curator, and Michelle LeBlanc, Director of Education, and Autumn Brown, Digital Production and Metadata Librarian, Boston Athenaeum, MA*

### The Path to Museum Leadership Starts with Fundraising (Room: My AD)

Many aspiring museum leaders shy away from fundraising—but it's one of the most essential skills for advancement. This engaging, candid session is designed for emerging professionals looking to build confidence and competence in fundraising. With practical advice, real talk, and a bit of humor, participants will learn how to overcome fear, embrace their strengths, and begin developing the skills needed to lead—and fund—the institutions of the future.

*Speaker: Joseph April, Director of Development, Strawbery Banke Museum, NH (NEMA Board)*

### Unlocking the Past: Lessons Learned from Two Case Studies in Interpreting Historic Interiors (Room: Ma C)

Considering refurnishing a historic room or house? Do your interiors reflect the stories you aim to share?

(Continued on page 29)

(Continued from page 28)

Discover how the Emily Dickinson Museum and The House of the Seven Gables completed transformative refurnishing projects to serve new interpretive goals. The presenters will walk you through the key participants, decision-making processes, essential resources, and unexpected opportunities that guided their work. Leave with practical strategies and inspiration for your own historic interpretation projects.

*Speakers: Susan Baker, Curator of Collections, The House of the Seven Gables, MA; Jane Wald, Jane and Robert Keiter Family Executive Director, Emily Dickinson Museum, MA*

### Who Says? Including Staff in Critical Decision-Making (Room: My BC)

Often museums think about challenging the status quo with visitors, but often skip the critical step of internal inclusion and change-making. This session features two museums with a track record of engaging staff at all levels in important decision-making. Museum staff will share their stories and useful tools for inclusivity, and give participants time to think about their own stories of inclusion and tools to make this possible.

*Speakers: Marie Beam, Executive Director, and Kellie Roche Nadeau, Programs Educator, Discovery Museum, MA; Karen Fisk, Executive Director, and Brenna Harvey, Associate Director of Visitor Experience, Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, CT; Elisabeth Nevins, Principal, Seed Education Consulting, MA; Rebecca Shulman, Principal Consultant, Museum Questions Consulting, MD*

3:00 pm – 3:45 pm

## EXHIBIT HALL CLOSING RECEPTION AND RAFFLE PRIZE DRAWING

(Room: Ma DF)



All are invited for one last chance to network with exhibitors, enjoy food, and win raffle prizes. Bring along your signed raffle card for a chance to win fabulous prizes, including a golden ticket to NEMA 2027!

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3:45 pm – 5:15 pm

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

### Activating a Grassroots Collections Revolution (Room: My BC)

This session aims to help participants understand the value of an Active Collections perspective by introducing concepts and presenting case studies focused on tiering systems, deaccessioning, and more. Participants will learn about available resources, start identifying collections related communities, and leave with new ideas for revolutionizing and reenergizing their collections. Participants will relate information presented in case studies to their own organization and identify their own "on-ramp" to Active Collections work.

*Speakers: Eileen Corcoran, Director of Service and Outreach, and Hannah Kirkpatrick, Program Coordinator, Activating 21st Century Local History Training Program, Vermont Historical Society; Natalie DeQuarto, Deaccession Curator, New York State Bureau of Historic Sites; Lindsey Weaver, Vice President, Brookfield Historical Society, VT*

### Centering Justice-Impacted Voices: Rethinking Interpretation through Collaborative Arts Practice (Room: C2)

How can museums move beyond traditional expectations and share interpretive authority with justice-impacted creators? This session brings together formerly incarcerated panelists and museum practitioners to explore practical strategies for inclusive collaboration, co-creation, and integrating lived experience into museum storytelling. The panel conversation will consider how to foster visitor openness to this subject matter and creating space for lived perspectives within exhibitions and programs. Attendees will gain tools for activating the arts as a vehicle for representation and more expansive interpretation.

*Speakers: Morgan Bengel, Curator and Site Administrator, Old New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine, CT; Jeffrey Greene, Prison Arts Program Manager, Community Partners in Action, CT; Danny Killion, Artist; Daryl McGraw, Founder, Formerly Inc., CT*

### Cultural Intelligence (Room: Ma A)

We invite museum leaders to join Mashantucket Pequot Museum leadership for a Cultural Intelligence Workshop developed for deep learning, strategic reflection, and transformative practice. Through this series, participants will: strengthen their ability to navigate complex cultural contexts with confidence and care; develop critical insight into culture, power, and effective cross-cultural engagement; gain practical tools and strategies to integrate cultural intelligence into institutional leadership and decision-making; leave with a renewed sense of self-awareness, relational accountability, and a clear plan to translate learning into impactful action. This series is designed for leaders committed to advancing more equitable, responsive, and culturally grounded museum practices.

*Speakers: Joshua Carter, Executive Director; Brooke Waldron, Cultural & Creative Strategy Consultant; and Mike Thomas, Director, Cultural Resources Department, Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, CT*

### Educators on the Front Line: Supporting Staff Through Con.lict, Burnout, and Difficult Dialogue (Room: My EF)

Frontline educators across the field are being asked to engage in increasingly complex and sometimes tense conversations with museum visitors. Institutions can't simply expect staff to handle these situations without support. Frontline employees need shared language, real-world tools, and comprehensive systems of care. Presented by a team spanning frontline educators and museum leadership, this workshop draws on lived experience across roles to explore clear, practical ways institutions can prepare staff for conflict and support them afterward.

*Speakers: Felicity Bell, Lead Educator; Meg Brown, Lead Educator; Lindsey Cahoon, Visitor Experience Manager; and Emily Spence, Director of Education, Old North Illuminated, MA*

### From Ideas to Institutions: The Process of Making Black History (Room: C5)

*In From Ideas to Institutions*, discover how Black history is created, preserved, and celebrated. This panel brings together museum leaders and scholars to explore the stories, strategies, and visions behind the institutions that honor Black history across four small museums in Massachusetts. Join in this vibrant discussion with your questions and reflections. Be part of shaping and celebrating Black History—and 100 years of Black History Month—with us at a time when *this work* is more important than ever.

*Speakers: Akiba Abaka, Executive Director, National Center of Afro-American Artists, MA; Dr. Kyera Singleton, Executive Director, Royall House and Slave Quarters, MA; Angela Tate, Chief Curator and Director of Collections Museum of African American History Boston/Nantucket, MA; Dr. Noelle Trent, President & CEO, Museum of African American History Boston/Nantucket, MA; Jen Turner, Executive Director, and Nikki Turpin, Co-Director, Robbins House, MA*

### Not Just Smart—Responsible: Whose Knowledge Trains the Machine?

(Room: C7)

Museums are moving quickly to adopt AI, often with more enthusiasm than reflection. But these systems don't emerge from nowhere—they are trained on data shaped by human voices, institutional histories, and embedded assumptions. So the real question isn't just what AI can do, but whose knowledge—and whose blind spots—it carries forward.

*Speakers: Jiayin Chen and Bridget Mullen, Harvard Extension School, MA; Katherine Jones, Program Director, Museum Studies, Harvard Extension School, MA*

### Ride the Waves of Uncertainty Without Losing Yourself (Room: My AD)

Museum work has never been easy, but right now it feels relentless. Government funding, public polarization, climate crisis, burnout— much as we might hope otherwise, these aren't passing problems. If we want museums to remain vital, we need good people to stay and keep building the field we dream up. This workshop gives you practical techniques and new mindsets to manage uncertainty without burning out. Come ready to participate, reflect, and leave with practical tools.

*Speaker: Rachel Ropeik, Principal / Wayfinder, Rachel S Ropeik, MA*

### Shaping Teen Programs through Collaborative Design (Room: Ma C)

Who's missing from the museum's audience? This question posed to a group of Connecticut College students launched a partnership that grew from a student design course into a high school enrichment program and culminated in a unique dual-enrollment course that brought college and high school students together for a community-driven museum studies course. From the first student-driven meetings to grading final projects, this session explores creative collaborations between a museum and educational institutions.

*Speakers: Claire Benedict, Associate Director of Community Partnerships & Student Engagement, Holleran Center for Community Action & Public Policy; Andrea Wollensak, Professor of Art, Ammerman Center Associate Fellow, Connecticut College; Eileen Donovan, Director of Learning and Engagement, and Sophia Gipstein Scirico, Learning and Engagement Coordinator, Lyman Allyn Art Museum, CT*

### Why Is This Even Here? Power, Interpretation, and Letting Visitors Decide

(Room: Ma B)

This interactive workshop explores who holds power in museum collections, curation, and interpretation. Using the RISD Museum's "Ways of Looking" introductory space as a case study, participants will examine strategies for sharing authority with visitors. Through prompts, discussion, and hands-on exercises, attendees will explore how exhibitions, interpretation, and technology can disrupt traditional narratives and create more inclusive, participatory museum experiences.

*Speakers: Brendan Campbell, Senior Experiential Designer, Creative Production; Jeremy Radtke, Interim Director, Creative Production; Amy Pickworth, Assistant Director of Museum Publications and Senior Editor; and Alexandra Poterack, Director, Academic Programs, RISD Museum*



5:15 pm – 6:00 pm

## NEWCOMERS RECEPTION (Room: C3)

Whether you're attending your first NEMA conference or are a conference veteran, come together for a chance to connect and network. Engage in the timeless act of exchanging advice and contacts. Don't forget to bring those business cards along too!

As registration is limited, be sure to sign up on the conference registration form. Cash bar and hors d'oeuvres. Conference newcomers get one drink ticket.

Hosted by Tufts University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Museum Studies

# THURSDAY EVENING EVENTS



## MOONLIGHT ON THE LIEUTENANT: AN EVENING AT THE FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM

Gather with friends and colleagues at the Florence Griswold Museum for an evening of art, history, and creativity. Explore the historic Griswold Boardinghouse for Artists, ca. 1910, the headquarters of the Lyme Art Colony, as well as the museum's collection of Connecticut art and new exhibition *Patchwork: Connecticut Artists Consider 250* in the museum galleries.



Come meet the museum's professional staff and friendly volunteers while enjoying light refreshments and hands-on creativity. A moonlit night to remember.

Time: 5:45-8:00 pm. Pre-registration fee of $45 includes transportation and light hors d'oeuvres. Open bar.

Meet outside the Main Entrance of the Marriott Hotel by 5:30pm to board the bus.

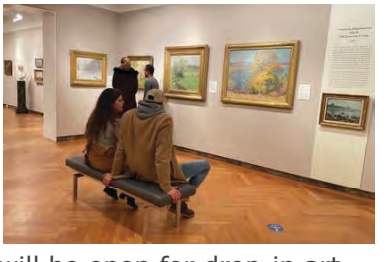
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## NEMA NIGHT AT THE LYMAN ALLYN ART MUSEUM

Join fellow conference attendees for an evening reception at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum. Mix and mingle with colleagues and art lovers while enjoying drinks and hearty hors d'oeuvres in a welcoming museum setting.



Docents will be stationed throughout the galleries to answer questions and provide brief guided overviews of our temporary exhibitions, as well as highlights from the museum's permanent installations that celebrate American art and history, and Louis Comfort Tiffany's ties to the region.

For a hands-on creative experience, the museum's art studio will be open for drop-in art-making. It's the perfect opportunity to connect, explore, and get inspired.

Time: 6:00-8:00 pm. Pre-registration fee of $45 includes transportation, heavy hors d'oeuvres, and a free drink ticket.

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Meet outside the Main Entrance of the Marriott Hotel by 5:45pm to board the bus.



## MEET-UPS

Want to arrange your own opportunities to connect? Interested in meeting colleagues outside the hotel and after hours? Use our conference app, Whova, to plan your own low-key gatherings and get-togethers at local bars and restaurants in the Mystic area!

# Friday, November 6

8:30 am – Noon
## REGISTRATION AND BOOKSTORE OPEN
(Room: MBF)

8:30 am – 9:00 am
## WAKE-UP COFFEE AND MORNING TREATS

8:30 am – 11:45 am
## OFF-SITE SESSION
**"Canterbury Female Boarding School: Courage, Conscience, & Continuance" Exhibit Tour and Conversation at the Prudence Crandall Museum**
Pre-registration required. Meet outside the Main Entrance of the Marriott Hotel by 8:15am to board the bus. Enjoy a curator-led hour-long tour of the exhibit "Canterbury Female Boarding School: Courage, Conscience, & Continuance" followed by an informal conversation on the reinterpretation process to spark ideas at your site. The Prudence Crandall Museum is the site of Crandall's Canterbury Female Boarding School (1831-1834). In 1832 Crandall admitted Sarah Harris, a young Black woman. When the town opposed this decision, she closed her school and reopened for Black and Brown students in 1833. The school was shuttered by a mob attack seventeen months later, but not before Crandall was arrested, jailed, and tried for breaking Connecticut's "Black Law." Many of the students became educators, reformers, and leaders. Crandall's trial impacted two U.S. Supreme Court decisions and laid the framework for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Prudence Crandall is the official State Heroine of Connecticut and the museum is both a National Historic Landmark and an International Site of Conscience.



9:00 am – 10:00 am
## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**From Sanctuary to Stewardship: How Nature, Community, and Critical Thinking Support Youth Well-Being and Environmental Leadership** (Room: Ma B)
The Norman Bird Sanctuary uses nature-based education to help young people develop critical thinking skills, emotional resilience, and a sense of belonging—all essential in a time of rising youth anxiety and environmental uncertainty. By connecting youth to the land and to their community, NBS fosters curiosity, confidence, and a deep understanding of how human and natural systems depend on one another.



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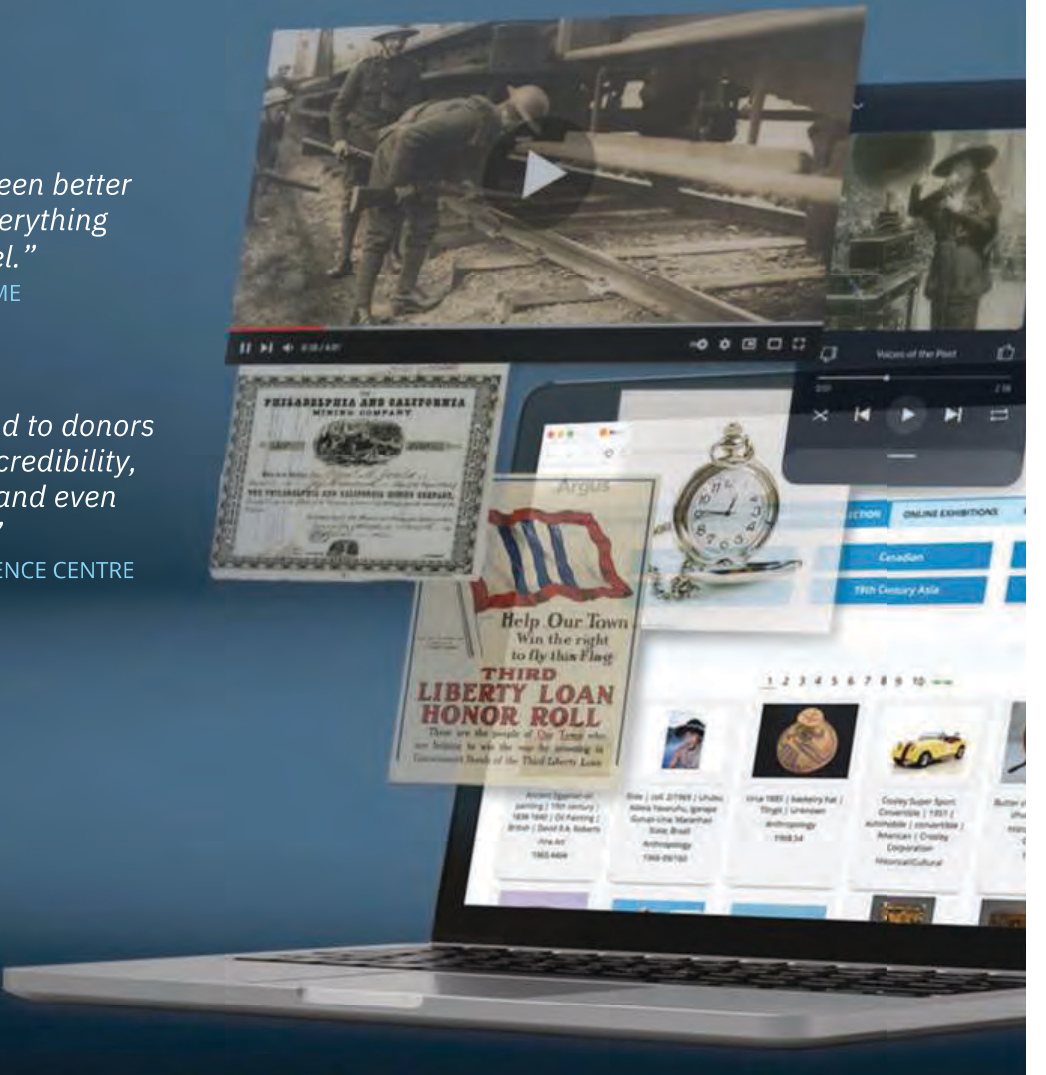
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This session explores how the Sanctuary builds ladders of engagement that guide youth from early outdoor exploration to leadership roles and exposure to environmental career pathways, all while nurturing mental health and inspiring lifelong stewardship.

*Speaker: Julie Safford, Lead Teacher Naturalist & ANT Volunteer Coordinator, Norman Bird Sanctuary, RI*

### Just Do It!: Championing Intersectional Accessibility in Fundraising and Communications (Room: My BC)

1 in 4 Americans have a disability. 28% of Gen Z identifies LGBTQ+. The population identifying as BIPOC grows yearly. Inclusion cannot be an aspiration; it has to happen now. Informed by lived experience, expert research, and peer input, Queer fundraiser Ali Kane and creative project manager Emily Robertson will offer proven practices that prioritize accessibility, representation, and intersectionality in fundraising and communications. Theory will meet practice as Ali and Emily share actionable advice to make any Development or Marketing department more accessible, LGBTQ-affirming, and culturally responsive.

*Speakers: Ali Kane, Founder & Principal / Manager of Grants Administration, ALK Consulting / Family Health Center of Worcester, MA; Emily Robertson, Owner and Founder, Studio Robertson, MA*

### Re-Establishing a Tribal Museum Archive (Room: Ma C)

This presentation will draw on real experiences from reintroducing the archives at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, where the archives department had been unstaffed for over 10 years. We will identify key first steps in assessing the state of an unmanaged museum archive collection, develop a realistic plan for re-establishing archival practices with limited staff, and discuss advocacy for archival priorities within a multi-use cultural space.

*Speaker: Emma Kushman, Archives and Collections Manager, Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, CT*

### Reframe, Relaunch, Reconnect (Room: C7)

What happens when you take a hard look at your membership program and decide it's time for a refresh? Panelists will share how they revamped Worcester Art Museum's long-standing membership program to better respond to audience needs and institutional goals. Learn how they aligned internal stakeholders, planned for a thoughtful rollout, retrained guest services teams, and clearly communicated updates to members. Panelists will share what worked, what required recalibration, and what surprised them along the way.

*Speakers: Madeline Feller, Director of Marketing and Communications; Jack Gallagher, Communications Manager; and Katy Sullivan, Senior Manager of Annual Giving, Worcester Art Museum, MA; Rosie Siemer, Managing Director, Radiance Insights, TX*

### Rising to the Challenge: Innovation, Engagement, and Climate Adaptation at Mystic Seaport Museum (Room: My AD)

Mystic Seaport Museum (MSM) is proactively addressing climate change threats by integrating resilience into campus planning and operations. In partnership with HGA, MSM combines stakeholder engagement, phased mitigation strategies,
and adaptable facility planning to safeguard collections and ensure long-term relevance. Emphasizing inclusivity, accessibility, and the museum's educational mission, MSM's approach offers valuable insights for institutions seeking to remain relevant, innovative, and mission-driven while navigating environmental uncertainty and evolving community needs.

*Speakers: Scott Cryer, Architect; Jake Culbertson, PhD, Design Anthropologist; and Michelle Miller, Architect, HGA, DC; Shannon McKenzie, Vice President, Watercraft Operations and Preservation, Mystic Seaport Museum, CT*

### Surfacing Black History: Building Resilience through Transdisciplinary Collaboration (Room: C5)

Drawing on the work of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar-artist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, this panel explores "sintering" as a model for organizations working to develop resilience while "pushing back." The *Documenting Black Lives in the Early Connecticut River Valley* project was initiated in 2020 to create community and a shared resource. Through this work, a shared vision for surfacing Black history developed, which transformed relationships and expanded programming possibilities. These bonds proved fortifying in 2025, when many organizations lost funding and NPS sites were dismantled.

*Speakers: Anika Lopes, Founder, Ancestral Bridges, MA; Elizabeth Pangburn, Humanities Programs Director, The Porter-Phelps-Huntington Museum, MA; Ousmane Power-Greene, Professor of African-American History, Clark University, MA;*

(Continued on page 36)

(Continued from page 35)

*Karen Sanchez-Eppler, President of the Board of Directors, Porter-Phelps-Huntington Foundation, MA*

**Teaching Calm: Practical Yoga Tools Museum Staff Can Use at Work** (Room: C3)
Museum professionals are navigating stress, uncertainty, and increasing demands, often without tools to support themselves or their teams. This teaching-focused practice introduces simple yoga postures, breathwork, and grounding techniques that can be easily integrated into the workday. Participants will learn, practice, and leave with adaptable strategies they can bring back to their museums to support well-being through challenging times.

*Speaker: Laurie Pasteryak, Business Development Manager, Museum Search & Reference, CT*

10:15 am – 11:15 am

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**Reimagining Place: Transforming a Coastal Nursing Home into the Westerly Museum of American Impressionism** (Room: C3)

The Westerly Museum of American Impressionism offers a unique case study in creating a new museum through adaptive reuse. Transforming a former nursing home into a welcoming cultural space, the project embraces the building's history while creating a place for art, learning, and connection. This session explores the transformation of the building, curating a private collection for public audiences, and the opportunities and challenges of opening and operating a new museum.

*Speakers: Catherine Shotick, Cynthia D. and Thomas P. Sculco Director, Westerly Museum of American Impressionism, RI; and Justin Hedde, Principal Architect, Centerbrook Architects & Planners, CT*

**Historic Decarbonization: Protecting the Past and the Future** (Room: Ma C)
Historic New England (HNE) is one of the nation's most comprehensive independent preservation organizations. HNE and GreenerU, a plan-design-build decarbonization firm, have partnered to advance climate action at multiple sites over



the past few years. Building on Casey Farm's 2023 sustainability and climate action plan, they partnered again in 2025 to develop a detailed emissions reduction plan for the property. The final plan lays out strategies and actions to decarbonize this organic working farm while preserving its historic nature.

*Speakers: Joie Grandbois, Director of Sustainability, Historic New England, MA; Madeline Rawson, Manager of Planning, GreenerU, Inc., MA*

### How to Run a Great Board Meeting (Room: C5)

It's challenging to run a good board meeting. Your board members may not know each other well and have very different relationships to the museum and reasons for supporting it. You have a lot of information to cover in a short time. You want to engage participants, but how? This session will share strategies for designing an engaging meeting, meeting board members where they are, and making the most of your time.

*Speakers: Phelan Fretz, Consultant, Museum Directors Roundtables, VT; Rebecca Shulman, Principal Consultant, Museum Questions Consulting, MD*

### Is It Haunted?: Defining the Line Between Spooky and Schlocky (Room: My BC)

New England is a popular fall destination, and for many institutions "spooky season" is also busy season. A large constituency of visitors to historic house museums and other historic sites is attracted by rumors of the supernatural or connections with historical tragedy. How can institutions maximize that opportunity while respecting their institutions' legacies, reputations, and the best practices of the museum field?

*Speakers: Alyx J. Colleran, Programs Assistant, Gibson House Museum, MA; Jenni Espinal, Museum Experience Manager, and David Moffat, Visitor Services Specialist-Research, The House of the Seven Gables, MA; Chelsea Johnston, Program Coordinator, Bristol Historical & Preservation Society, RI*

### Leading Through Uncertainty: Reframing Museums as Essential and Fundraising with Purpose (Room: My AD)

Museums today face an increasingly complex landscape—shifting public expectations, evolving funding sources, political and cultural pressures, and growing competition for philanthropic support. In this environment, fundraising cannot succeed in isolation. It begins with how museums define, communicate, and demonstrate their public value. This interactive session explores how museum leaders can reframe their institutions as essential civic assets while building stronger philanthropic partnerships rooted in mission and impact. Participants will examine how institutional narrative, case for support, and fundraising strategy are deeply interconnected—and how a compelling public value proposition strengthens donor engagement, volunteer leadership, board advocacy, and long-term organizational resilience.

*Speakers: Joseph April, Director of Development, Strawbery Banke Museum, NH (NEMA Board); Paula Vogel, Vice President, Development & External Affairs, Historic New England, MA*

### Revolutionary Conversations: LGBTQ Oral Histories Transforming Community (Room: My EF)

The Ridgefield LGBTQIA+ Oral History Project brings queer youth, elders, educators, and historians together to document overlooked stories. This session shares perspectives from a two-year collaboration between the Ridgefield Historical Society, Ridgefield Pride, and Ridgefield High School GSA that is reshaping local history through intergenerational dialogue, archival preservation, and community-centered public history.

*Speakers: Stephen Bartkus, Executive Director, Ridgefield Historical Society, CT; Robin R. Collins, Founder/Literacy Specialist, The Literacy Barn, CT; Lynn Discenza, Interviewee; Susan Ferentinos, Independent Public History Consultant; Alisa Trachtenberg, Founder, Ridgefield Pride, CT; William Delino, Student Volunteer Interviewer/GSA President, and Julie Henderson, Faculty and GSA Advisor, Ridgefield High School, Mae Carpenter, Student Volunteer Interviewer, Ridgefield High School, CT*



**Speed Dating for Community Partnerships** (Room: Ma A)
Partnerships between for-profits and nonprofits within our communities are crucial for the survival of museums. They provide exposure, offer audiences new experiences, and open new doors for museums to continue to work toward their mission. Partnership opportunities are endless, and this session gives museums the time to brainstorm what those partnerships look like. Join us for a speed-dating-style session of brainstorming with other museums on the same path!
*Speakers: Samantha Depergola, Assistant Director of Storrowton Village Museum, Eastern States Exposition, MA; Doria Hughes, Managing Director, Rosemarie Beck Foundation, NY; Louise Reilly Sacco, Permanent Acting Interim Executive Director, Museum Of Bad Art, MA*

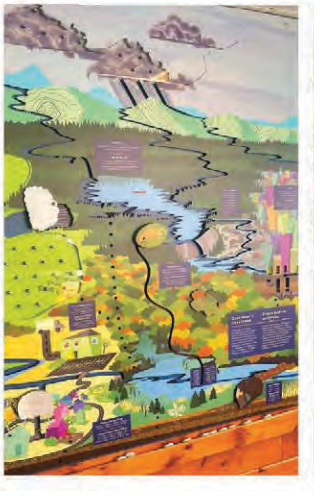
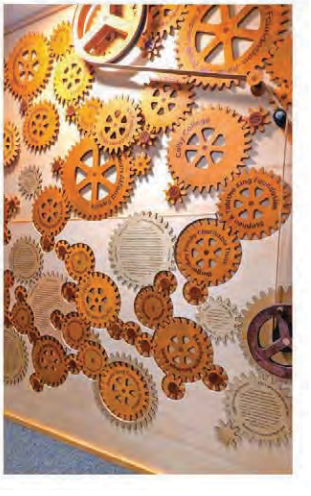
**Welcoming Adults with Cognitive and Intellectual Disabilities into our Museums While Learning from Them** (Room: C7)
A science and a children's museum each share their successes (many) and challenges (even more!) in creating an inclusive environment for adults with cognitive and intellectual disabilities. Following a brief panel discussion, we will host a short brainstorming workshop to help attendees feel empowered to start welcoming this audience through their doors. Learn how to move from separate spaces to intentional integration of universal design learning and accessibility best practices throughout your museum experience.
*Speakers: Shana Hawrylchak, Executive Director, SEE Science Center, NH; Susan Heilman, PhD, Director of Community Partnerships, Discovery Museum, MA*

11:15 am – 11:30 am
## SESSION BREAK

11:30 am – 12:30 pm
## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**Advisory Groups: Opportunities for Engagement** (Room: My AD)
Join staff and advisory group members from Castle in the Clouds as they share a case study of the creation of their two advisory groups. Learn from the Castle's experience about the opportunities and pitfalls associated with formally




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engaging community members to guide the work of the museum, and leave with practical steps you can take to create successful advisory groups at your own museum.

*Speakers: Charles Clark, Executive Director (NEMA Board); Debbi Finkelstein, Director of Education & Partnerships; Howard Lowe, Community Advisory Member; and Kim Whitehouse, Former C-TAG member, Castle Preservation Society, NH*

### Community in Action: Collecting and Preserving New England Sports Collections (Room: Ma B)

Sports have always reflected human values like commitment, strength, and discipline. Throughout history, physical and strategic competitions celebrated superiority and collaboration across a range of personal, regional, political, and spiritual domains. Collecting, preserving, and interpreting sports-related materials is an important priority for institutions both small and large across the diverse and storied New England region. Join two NEMA PAG chairs as we share our experiences and suggest new initiatives to connect and protect our local sports history as we explore topics such as race, gender, identity, immigration, and assimilation.

*Speakers: Camille Breeze, Director-Chief Conservator, Museum Textiles Services, MA; Douglas Stark, Museum Consultant, Douglas Stark Consulting, RI*

### Courage, Resilience, and Self-Liberation: Teen Civic Designers, Harriet Jacobs, and Public Memory in Cambridge, MA (Room: My EF)

At a time when truth is under attack, this panel asks: who gets to do the remembering? This session explores how museums can partner with local governments, carpenters' unions, and makerspaces to support youth-led truth-telling and historical reckoning. Grounded in the conference theme, the session invites participants to witness what healing and growth become possible when civically engaged teenagers are not only trusted but compensated as local designers, interpreters, and stewards of public memory.

*Speakers: Suryani Dewa Ayu, Director of Civic Design & Engagement; Samadhi Simmons Mugera, Youth Civic Designer; Jada Simmons Ononeme, Director of Education, E. Denise Simmons, CEO & Founder; Dr. Carolyn Turk, Board President, and Sophie G. Young, Special Projects Lead, The Cambridge Museum of History & Culture, MA*

### History as a Springboard: Activating the Past in an Unsettled Present (Room: Ma C)

What is history for in the present moment? This session explores two approaches to making history relevant today: as a springboard for creativity and action, and as a space for empathy and reflection in uncertain times. Using the Paul Revere Museum of Discovery and Innovation as a case study, presenters share design strategies and lessons for connecting past and present without oversimplifying complexity or becoming didactic.

*Speakers: John Morton, Executive Director, Paul Revere Museum of Discovery and Innovation, MA; Dave Unger, Director of Content Curation, EXP Studios, RI*

### Keeping Collections from Going the Way of the Dinosaurs: Using Technology to Explore and Preserve Historical Objects (Room: C5)

Museum collections are sometimes seen as static relics of the past. In this session, we will explore a variety of ways in which technology can make collections more accessible and relevant and how partnerships with other organizations can make that possible. This session will focus on a project involving 3D modeling historically significant dinosaur models as a primary example, but will also touch on X-ray, CT scanning, and other technologies.

*Speaker: Beau Harris, Director of Collections, Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium, VT (NEMA Board)*



(continued from page 39)

### Leadership Is a Team Sport: Peer Networks for Museum Resilience

(Room: Ma A)

Museum leadership can be isolating, particularly in uncertain times. This interactive session explores how peer support networks help leaders navigate controversy, financial pressure, governance challenges, and mission-driven decision-making. Through guided roundtable exercises, participants will map and strengthen their own leadership networks, practice structured peer advising, and leave with practical tools for building trusted circles of support that increase resilience, clarity, and impact.

*Speakers: Phelan Fretz, Principal, Fretz Consulting Services, VT; Adam Kane, Executive Director, Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium, VT*

### Let's Put a Label on It! (Room: C7)

In this session, participants will discuss the ins and outs of content and label writing for exhibitions. In addition to discussing best practices and processes, participants will evaluate real exhibit text examples for clarity, visitor engagement, and accessibility. The session will conclude with a conversation wherein participants can share stories, trade resources, and ask questions.

*Speakers: Katherine Fecteau, Curator of Exhibitions, Old Sturbridge Village, MA; Dorothy Rivera, Manager of Research and Exhibits, The Mary Baker Eddy Library, MA*

### Rebels, Tories, and Untold Stories: Using the 250th to Bury the Colonial Revival

(Room: My BC)

Local historical societies are notorious for their history, especially in relation to the American once-in-a-lifetime chance to remake their public image by tacking hard against that approach. Representatives of two organizations on opposite challenges and rewards of using the events of the eighteenth century to push their interpretive work.

*Speakers: Abby Battis, Director, Historic Beverly, MA; Heather Seger, Executive Director, and A. Bowdoin Van Riper, Research Librarian, Martha's Vineyard Museum, MA*

### "Who Is Missing in Bar Harbor?"

The Bar Harbor Historical Society used a Maine Humanities Capacity Building grant to "acknowledge the story of our site in Wabanaki history and in the history of Bar Harbor." We partnered with the Abbe Museum and Mi'kmaq Storyteller/artist/historian Jennifer Pictou. We asked: What can a land acknowledgement be? How do you bring your staff to unanimous consent? How do we effectively cede space for all histories?

*Speakers: Erin Cough, Executive Director, and Nikki Moser, Director of Engagement, Bar Harbor Historical Society, ME; Jennifer Pictou, Mi'kmaq Storyteller/artist/historian, Owner, Bar Harbor Ghost Tours, ME*

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm

## NEMA Annual Meeting and Excellence Awards Celebration Luncheon

(Room: Ma DF)

Close out your 2026 conference by celebrating the winners of this year's NEMA Excellence Awards, sponsored by the Arts Administration Program at Boston University. Hear about NEMA's latest initiatives, then help elect the next NEMA board and officers during a brief annual meeting before heading home from the conference.

# Thanks for making the conference possible!

A special thank you to all of our speakers, NEMA Board, PAG Chairs, Community of Practice Co-Facilitators, Sponsors, Exhibitors, and our volunteers.

**Host Institutions**
Connecticut College Arboretum; Florence Griswold Museum; Lyman Allyn Art Museum; Mystic Museum of Art; Mystic Seaport Museum; Prudence Crandall Museum

**Scholarship Sponsors**
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**Session Reading Team**
Susan Battle, Matt Blazek, Vanessa Bumpus, Alissa Butler, Carrie Cushman, Kristy Ellsworth, Beau Harris (NEMA Board), Kyra Laiuppa, Tanya Rose Lane, Kristina Oschmann, David Rau, Leeann Ream, Allison Smith, and Lily Young.

**2025-2026 Board**
Joseph April, Strawbery Banke Museum; Raney Bench (Executive Committee), Mount Desert Island Historical Society; Tiffini Bowers, John Nicholas Brown Center; Charles Clark (Executive Committee), Castle Preservation Society / Castle in the Clouds; Amanda Goodheart Parks, New England Air Museum; Beau Harris, Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium; Brindha Muniappan, Discovery Museum (Chair); Chris Newell, Akomawt Educational Initiative; Emily Pearce, Schooner Adventure; Cynthia Robinson, Tufts University, Museum Studies; Allison Shilling (Executive Committee), The Bruce Museum; Margaret Tamulonis, Fleming Museum of Art; Doneeca Thurston-Chavez (Executive Committee), Lynn Museum/LynnArts; and Cynthia Walker (Executive Committee), Brick Store Museum.

**NEMA team:** Jennifer DePrizio, Executive Director; Melissa Davis-Bell, Transition Lead; Susan Musinsky, Senior Advisor.

**IMN support team**: Kristen Kimbrel, Event Manager; Keyla Alanes, Program Manager; Emma Hummer, Communication Manager; Emily Ziemecki, Speaker Support

Special thanks to Amy Peters Clark, Heather Riggs, and Jennifer Wilson, former NEMA staff, for their years of support and leadership at NEMA, and in their work for the 2026 Mystic Conference.

**Image Credits:**
We extend our sincere thanks to the following individuals and organizations for generously contributing photographs to this year's conference program: Kevin Curtis (Unsplash), Florence Griswold Museum, Kevin Harkins, Laura LoTurco-Gorian (artist, Mystic Museum of Art), Lyman Allyn Art Museum, Mystic Seaport Museum, Emily Pearce, Prudence Crandall Museum, and Erin X. Smithers. Additional images include stock photography.


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## SILVER

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Todd Harris
todd@42designfab.com
42designfab.com
42 Design Fab Studio is a full service design/build studio that provides exhibits, themed environments, and custom creations to a diverse client base. Our team of skilled designers and craftsmen work collaboratively with each other and our clients in order to develop the best solutions to any design challenge

**Arts Administration Program at Boston University**
Douglas DeNatale
alshore@bu.edu, dpd@bu.edu
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Booth #37
Emily Jenkins, Scott Richardson, Leigh Walker, ejenkinsdinunno@grlarchitects.com, srichardson@grlarchitects.com,
LWalker@grlarchitects.com
www.grlarchitects.com
Gorman Richardson Lewis Architects (GRLA) is a multidisciplinary design firm providing architecture, interior design, master planning, and building envelope consulting services throughout New England. Celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2026, we proudly partner with museums, cultural institutions, and historic organizations to create engaging, sustainable, accessible, and inspiring environments.

**NEDCC**
Booth #17
Tahe Zalal
tzalal@nedcc.org
www.nedcc.org
Founded in 1973, the Northeast Document Conservation Center is a nonprofit specializing in conservation treatment, digital imaging, and audio preservation services, as well as preservation training, assessments and consultations, and disaster advice on collections. Contact NEDCC at info@nedcc.org.

**Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) Eastern Region Program at Waynesburg University**
Barbara Kirby
bkirby@waynesburg.edu
www.waynesburg.edu/community/tps-eastern-region
Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region, coordinated by Waynesburg University, partners with museums to connect educators and learners with the Library of Congress. Through professional learning, grant funding, and collaborative initiatives, we help

museums integrate primary sources into exhibitions, educational programs, and community experiences that inspire inquiry, dialogue, and lifelong learning.

**Tufts University Museum Studies Program**
James Golden
Maura.Mcdonald@tufts.edu
museumstudies.tufts.edu
Tufts University's Museum Studies Program prepares newcomers to the field and enhances the skills of current museum professionals. Learn about audience engagement, collections management, exhibition development, evaluation, digital media, fundraising, and more. Summer courses are open to all. Help shape the future of museums.

**U.S.Art Company**
Booth #34
Ronald Bates
rbates@usart.com
U.S.Art Company is one of the premier fine art handling companies in the country specializing in museum quality transportation, crating, installation, storage, international customs services, and exhibition coordination. U.S.Art offers the most extensive US shuttle network. With all of our services, safety and security are top priorities.

## BRONZE

**Harvard University Extension School, Museum Studies**
Kathy Jones
kathy_jones@harvard.edu
www.extension.harvard.edu/museum
Whether you're interested in collections management, exhibitions, education, or another aspect of museum work, the Museum Studies Graduate Program at Harvard Extension School can help you embark on a successful career in the industry. In courses that connect theory and practice, you investigate the challenges confronting museums today.

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Pat Maloney
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Innovative FOTO is the leading US designer, manufacturer, and operator of custom photo booths and kiosks. Operating over 1,500 revenue-sharing booths across North America with 30 million annual customer interactions, we hold an 80% market share in prime venues, helping businesses monetize unused spaces through cutting-edge technology and exceptional guest experiences.

**SAQA Global Exhibitions**
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SAQA Global Exhibitions provides you with dynamic artwork guaranteed to bring thousands of visitors through your door. We work with a diverse group of international artists, providing themes that cover a wide range of genres and topics. Voices from around the world enhance your community dialogue and engage visitors in new ways.

**University Products**
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jadunphy@universityproducts.com
www.universityproducts.com
University Products is the leading supplier of museum quality storage and display products as well as conservation tools and equipment. The company has been in business for over 50 years and manufactures its archival products in western Massachusetts. Museums worldwide buy from this local company. Shouldn't you?

## BLUE

**CambridgeSeven**
Chris Muskopf
cmuskopf@cambridgeseven.com
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# Exhibitor Products & Services Guide

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Booth #9
(see Sponsor listing)

**Adjective Art & Framing**
Booth #6A
Alex Jacobson
alex@adjframes.com
Adjective Art & Framing provides handmade custom frames, large-format inkjet printing and mounting, art and frame conservation, and professional art installation for museums and cultural institutions throughout New England. Every project is handled with the same care, whether it's a single piece or an entire collection.

**Arcadia Publishing**
Booth #22
Dani McGrath
dani.mcgrath@historypress.net
https://www.arcadiapublishing.com/
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**ARK**
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**Asgaard Systems**
Booth #11
Benjamin Adamitus
benjamin@asgaard-systems.com
https://asgaard-systems.com/

Asgaard Systems provides storage and display solutions for museums, galleries, and interpretive centers. We've partnered with select domestic and international manufacturers to offer an unparalleled portfolio of products. From Artifact Storage and Archival Drawer Modules for small objects, to Art Collection and Portrait Storage Systems.

**Capption LLC**
Booth #23
Sherman Bausch
https://capption.com/index.html
Capption delivers instant exhibit accessibility. With a single phone tap, visitors receive multimedia content translated into their language, formatted for their exact needs. Capption shatters access barriers for aging, non-native, low-vision, mobility-impaired, and otherwise inconvenienced guests. A solo curator can fully Capption a 30-work exhibit in 45 minutes.

**Center for Collections Care at Beloit College**
Booth #28
Nicolette Meister
meistern@beloit.edu
http://www.beloit.edu/ccc
The Center for Collections Care (C3) at Beloit the Humanities. College provides online and in-person professional development courses in conservation, exhibit mount making, crating and packing, NAGPRA, and cultural care. Courses are not credit-bearing and scholarships are available and supported by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

**CohnReznick**
Booth #40
Rebecca Lyman
https://www.cohnreznick.com/
CohnReznick provides specialized advisory, assurance, and tax services tailored to the unique needs of not-for-profits and museums. The firm helps arts, cultural, and charitable organizations navigate complex regulatory environments, manage compliance, and implement robust internal controls to optimize financial performance and protect vital funding.

**Collector Systems, LLC**
Booth #21
Ashley Campone
acampone@collectorsystems.com
https://www.collectorsystems.com/
Collector Systems is a powerful cloud-based platform built for museums, libraries, historic homes, and foundations. It streamlines how teams manage, document, and share collections—from art and archives to archaeology and history, while supporting collaboration anywhere. With a mobile app for fieldwork and integrated publishing for online access, CS makes collections management effortless and engaging.

**Corgan**
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**Crafted Call**
Booth #44
Jonah Schulte
jonah@jonahschulte.com
https://www.craftedcall.com/
Crafted Call is an all-in-one management platform for museums, galleries, and art organizations. It provides calls for artists, submissions and jury review, exhibitions, events, memberships, volunteers, marketing, integrated payments and more. Simplify your workflow from open call through closing reception. Stop by for a live demo and get 2 months free.

**Crozier**
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**Delta Designs, Ltd**
Booth #1
Emma Leppäjoki
emma.leppajoki@bruynzeel.se
https://www.deltadesignsltd.com/

Delta Designs helps museums preserve what matters most. We design and manufacture custom storage solutions that safeguard collections, maximize space and support long-term preservation. From natural history specimens to art and archives, our storage solutions are tailored to the unique requirements of every collection.

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Shaun McCauley
shaun.mccauley@experiencedesignstudios.com https://www.experiencedesignstudios.com/exp-mission
EXP Studios is a nationally accomplished interpretive planning, design and production firm founded in Boston in 1980. EXP has garnered awards for its groundbreaking design from AAM, ASTC and AZA. EXP's mission is to produce experiences that build social capital having attracted over a billion exhibit visits.

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Ashlyn Christman-McCarty
ashlyn.christman-mccarty@gaylord.com https://www.gaylord.com/
Explore Gaylord Archival for exhibit and preservation solutions. Visit our booth to experience the AXS Showcase System: a brilliantly simple, patent-pending design combining magnets and security screws. This scalable, conservation-grade acrylic showcase ships flat, assembles in minutes, and can be accessed by a single-person.

**Gorman Richardson Lewis Architects**
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**GoSeeArt**
Booth #25
Xiaohang Quan
myleo727@gmail.com
https://goseeart.com/home
GoSeeArt is an app that helps people explore, plan, and track visits to art museums and exhibitions. Our mission is to make art more discoverable, promoting well-being and community connection. We partner with institutions large and small to create the most comprehensive platform dedicated to the arts. Please come by Booth #25 - we'd love to meet you!

**H2design**
Booth #29
Larissa Hanson
larissa@h2designstudio.org
H2 Design is women-owned and operated. We take projects large or small, indoors or out, from start to finish. Our services include museum master planning, strategic and interpretive planning, exhibition & media design, audience research, project management, exhibit and media production services, as well as full exhibition build-out and installation services.

**Hollinger Metal Edge**
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Abby Shaw
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https://www.hollingermetaledge.com/Hollinger Metal Edge has been the leading supplier of archival materials for government and institutional museums, historical societies, archives, libraries, universities, galleries and private collections since 1945. With our experienced management and staff, we are dedicated to quality, customer service and competitive prices.

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misaksen@imls.gov
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hi@kindkiosk.com
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Kind Kiosk modernizes in-person fundraising with kiosks and handheld devices. From galas and conferences to lobby or exhibit installations, we help you maximize your impact. Integrate with your CRM, collect surveys, sell memberships or merch, grow mailing lists, check in volunteers, and more - all in one seamless platform.

**Lighting Services Inc.**
Booth #12
Joyce Cassidy
j.cassidy@maillsi.com
https://www.lightingservicesinc.com/
Lighting Services Inc is the premier manufacturer of Track, Accent, and Display Lighting systems for Museum environments. Since 1958, we have designed, engineered and manufactured the highest quality lighting products

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**Luxam**
Booth #10
Michael Oliveras
michael@luxam.com
https://luxam.com/
Luxam brings remarkable museum collections into focus while safeguarding them for generations to come. For more than three decades, its fibre-optic and MicroLED systems have combined conservation-conscious design with exacting control, custom manufacture and expert focusing. Every installation is shaped by knowledgeable people, from first concept to enduring, hands-on support.

**Lyrasis**
Booth #36
Christina Cotton
christina.cotton@lyrasis.org
https://lyrasis.org/
As a mission-driven nonprofit, Lyrasis provides content services, open technologies, and community-based solutions to help libraries, archives, museums, and cultural heritage organizations achieve together what no institution can do alone.

**Maquette Fine Arts Services**
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Collins Warren
collins.warren@maquettefas.com
https://maquettefas.com/
Since our inception in 2012, our business philosophy has been based on excellent service and exceptional people. Maquette provides a full range of art logistic services for institutions large and small. Our four locations in NYC, New Haven, Boston and Washington, DC offer transport, handling, rigging, installation, crating, and storage.

**Museable**
Booth #30
Joe Hobson
joe@museable.com
https://museable.com/
Museable is built for small to mid-sized museums. We make it easy to manage and publish collections, curate digital exhibitions, and engage audiences without technical complexity. We believe in sharing stories, preserving culture, and building community.

**Museum Scan**
Booth #3
Jack Defay
info@museumscan.com
https://museumscan.com
Museum Scan specializes in non-contact 3D scanning and photogrammetry of museum collections. We create high-fidelity digital models for web, AR, and educational use, plus tactile replicas, animations, and braille resources. These tools expand access and engagement while protecting original artifacts.

**Museum Search & Reference**
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(see Sponsor listing)

**NEDCC**
Booth #17
(see Sponsor listing)

**Panoptic Design/Build**
Booth #35
Terra Fletcher
terra@panopticdesignbuild.com
http://www.panopticdesignbuild.com
Art, engineering, and museum experience come together at Panoptic to create a full spectrum of magical custom and pre-made exhibits for museums, visitor centers, and historic sites. From planning through install, we specialize in solving "impossible" exhibit challenges and creating durable, hands-on interactive elements for all ages.

**PastPerfect Software**
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Sara Van De Carr
sara@museumsoftware.com
https://museumsoftware.com/
Our products combine collection and contact management into affordable, easy-to-use software with options to share collection records with the public through customizable and fully searchable online collection websites. We offer both web-based and desktop software options to meet the needs of organizations of any size, budget, or collection type

**Perch Design Studio**
Booth #5
Angel Jung
angel@perchmade.com
https://perchmade.com/
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**Picturae**
Booth #6D
Maya Whitaker
M.Whitaker@picturae.com
https://picturae.com
At Picturae, we specialize in mass digitization services for cultural heritage and natural history institutions. We utilize our proprietary digitization equipment and software to design custom, photography-based workflows for the unique needs of your collection. With 25+ years of expertise, our services prioritize collection care, image quality, and workflow efficiency.

**Re:Discovery Software**
Booth #19
Vanessa Christopher
vanessa@rediscov.com
https://rediscoverysoftware.com/
Re Software provides collections management solutions for museums, historical societies, archives, libraries, and archaeological organizations. Its Proficio software

helps institutions catalog, organize, track, and preserve collections while managing loans, exhibitions, and inventories. With more than 30 years of experience, Re offers customizable tools that improve efficiency and expand public access to collections.

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**SmallCorp**
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Kristina McComb
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FamigliettiNP@si.edu
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**Soutron Global**
Booth #6
Kelsey Lloyd
kelsey.lloyd@soutron.com
www.soutron.com
Soutron Global provides collections management software built for museums, archives, and cultural heritage organizations. Our cloud-based platform brings objects, archives, library holdings, and digital assets into one searchable system, simplifying cataloging, provenance, and public access. Trusted by institutions worldwide, Soutron helps teams of all sizes manage collections with less effort.

**The Arcana Workshop, LLC**
Booth #20
Mike Turner
mike@arcanaworkshop.com
https://www.arcanaworkshop.com/
At the Arcana Workshop, we exist to spark curiosity and ignite imagination through collaboration. Celebrating ten years, we create visually impactful experiences where stories come alive and visitors discover something extraordinary. We believe exhibits should do more than inform—they should change how people see their world.

**U.S.Art Company**
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treva@winikurproductions.com
www.winikurproductions.com
Winikur Productions is a Boston-based company specializing in media, including films, interactives, multimedia, immersive experiences and XR, for museums, visitor centers, educational institutions, broadcast and web. We are technology savvy and platform agnostic: we believe that content and format should work together to create the most impactful and memorable experiences.

**Zetcom**
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Alyssa Langlais
alyssa.langlais@zetcom.com
https://www.zetcom.com/en/
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- learn more about the creative ecosystem

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# NEMA 2026 Conference Notes

A place to capture people, ideas, and inspiration from the conference.

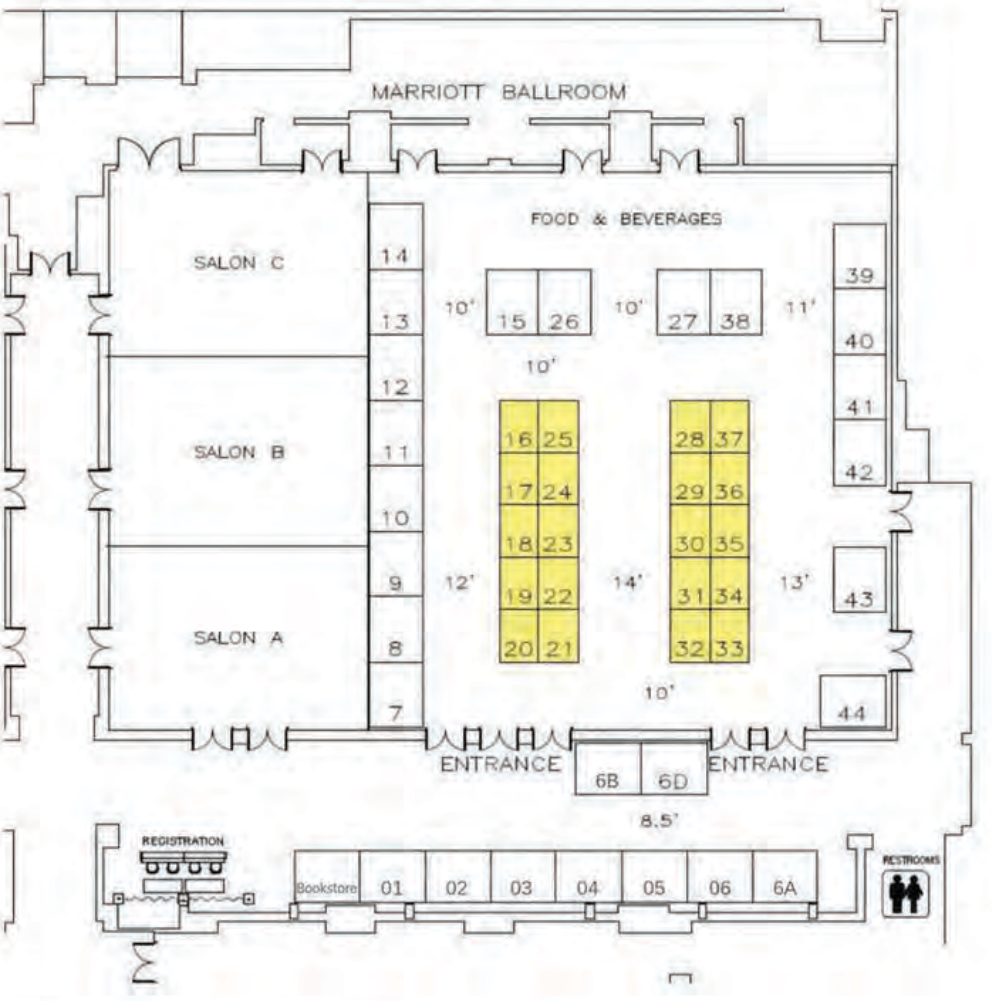
**People I met**

**Interesting ideas**

**Sessions / things I don't want to miss**

**Things to follow up on**

**Big takeaway**




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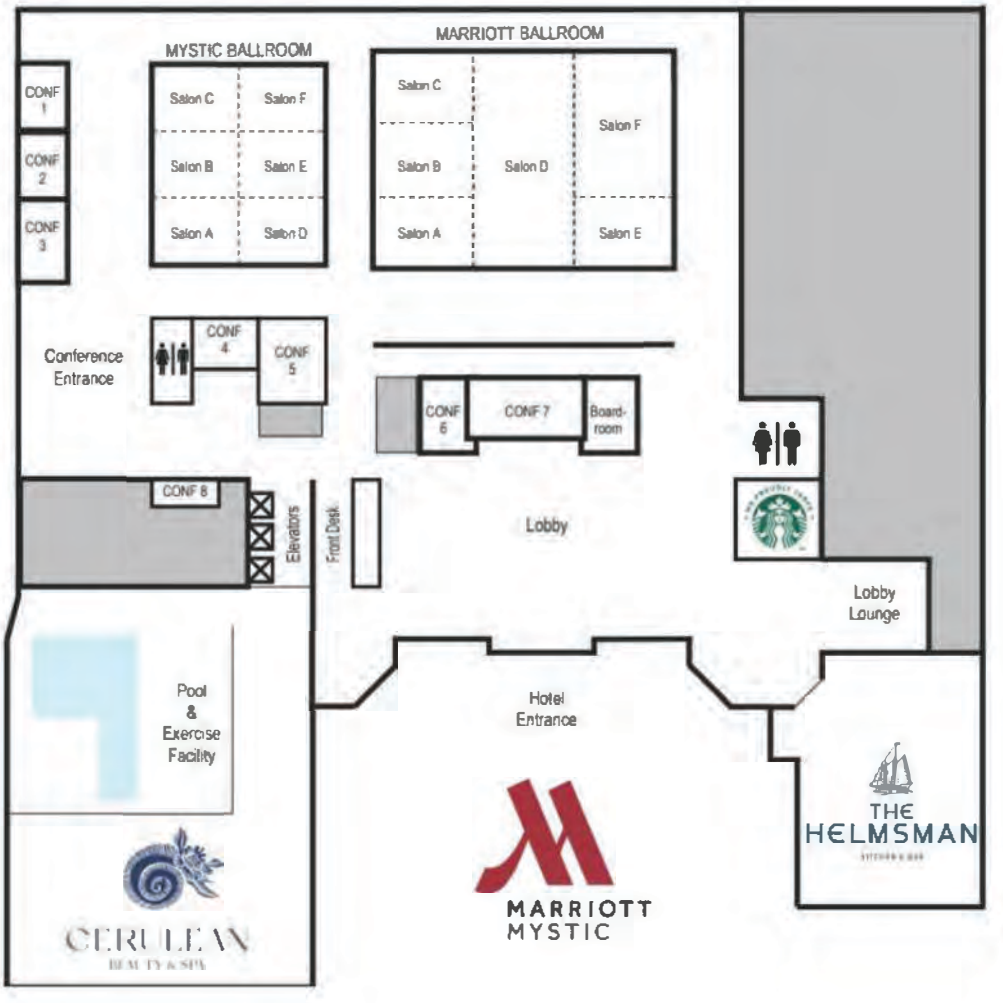
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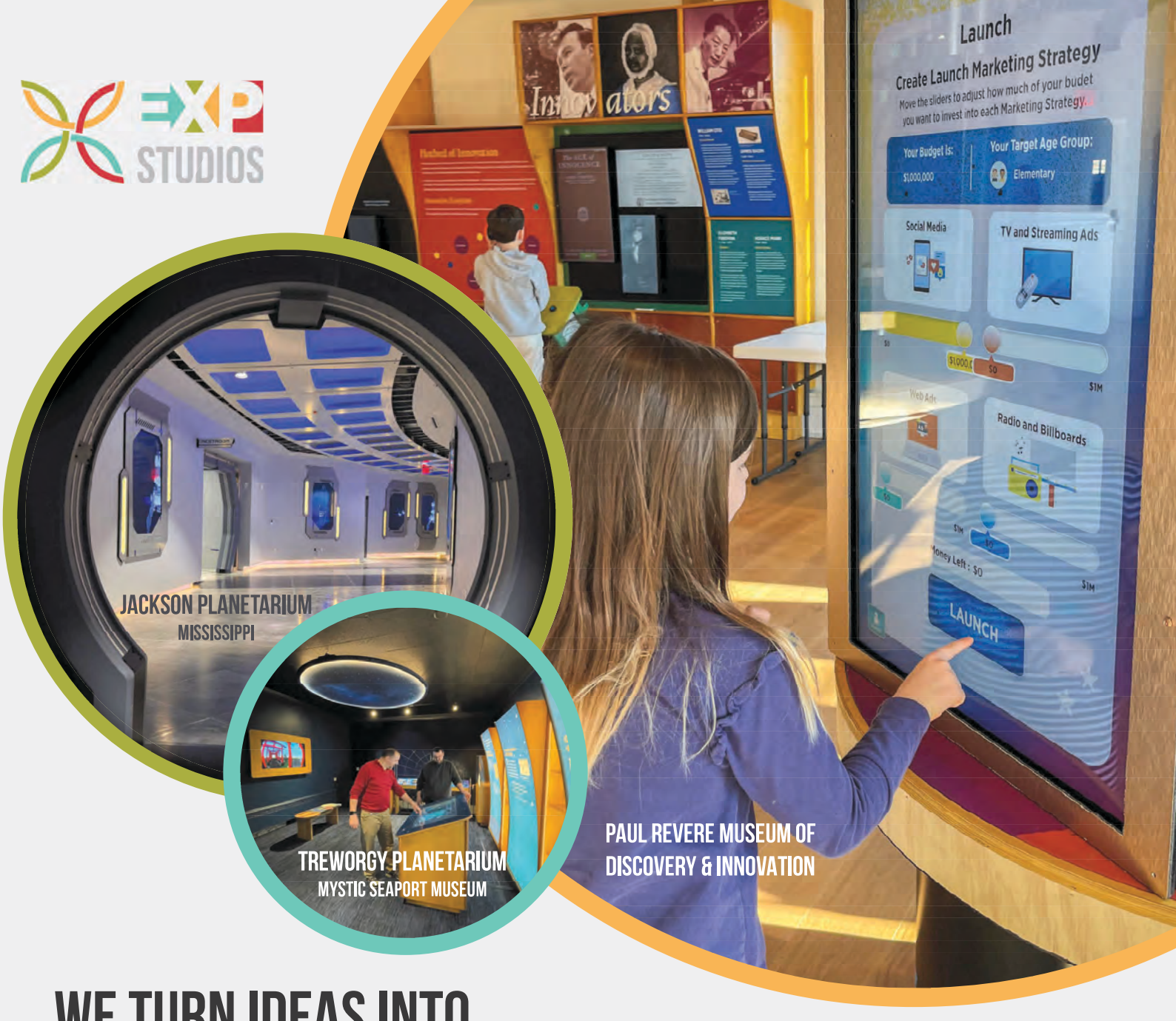
CambridgeSeven




## Room Locations Key

**Conference 1 - C1**
**Conference 2 - C2**
**Conference 3 - C3**
**Conference 5 - C5**
**Conference 7 - C7**
**Helmsman - H**
**Marriott A - Ma A**
**Marriott A-C - Ma AC**
**Marriott B - Ma B**
**Marriott Ballroom Foyer - MBF**
**Marriott C - Ma C**
**Marriott D-F - Ma DF**
**Marriott Lobby - ML**
**Mystic A + D - My AD**
**Mystic B + C - My BC**
**Mystic E + F - My EF**
**Off-Site - O**

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Watch for our session featuring EXP Studios' Content Director, Dave Unger, Ph.D., alongside John Morton, Executive Director of the Museum of Discovery and Innovation (MoDI)!

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